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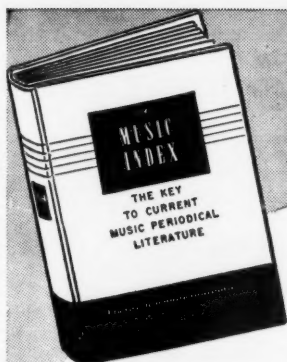
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Edited by GEOFFREY SHARP

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MAY, 1951

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The Progress of Alan Rawsthorne

BY

A. E. F. DICKINSON

THERE are still a good many obstacles to a wide and just appreciation of modern instrumental music in this country. First, the habits of musical youth, at whatever actual age. Academically, school and university courses rarely show that attention to contemporary art which may be found in regard to drama and, in some measure, poetry. When it comes to the application of technique, which is a peculiarity of music syllabuses as against English or Modern Languages, the official accents are heavily on the sixteenth and early-eighteenth centuries, and the polyphonic styles first and foremost. Passing to the home university on which most people still depend, namely planned concert-schemes and published introductions, reviews and notices, we find a marked devotion to the classics and their performance, except where there is an unusual determination to serve an intelligent minority. The Henry Wood Promenade Concerts, once *Ein feste Burg* for the rising composer, have lost the liberalism of their founder. What is considered classical may be a matter of fashion, to which enterprising concert-givers and critics may occasionally succeed in adding a contemporary name; but an old name, however dusty, has a much better start, perhaps by its mere quality of having survived the dust. Meanwhile most critics seem to have chief space for the preservation of the proprieties in stage performances of the immortal Mozart and the vital Verdi, and none for the due reception of a new work by Kodály or Tippett.

Moreover, while structure has received some emphasis, and the programme-notes of Tovey and others have made the listening and educable public more form-conscious in conjunction with unceasing performances of the Austrian and German classics, there is not much to be read at leisure on the structural methods of Sibelius and Vaughan Williams, and less about younger composers. When it comes to texture—whether of harmonic sequence, contrapuntal development or the impressive blend of orchestral groups—there is very little indeed; little even about Bach and Wagner, to name two “conscious” master-craftsmen. It is very hard to gauge how far below the surface the public acquaintance has reached, especially in a particular case—whereas articles for the general reader on modern types of stage play can assume working distinctions between Rattigan and Bridie, as well as between Shaw and Ibsen.

In the matter of poetry, perhaps, a decline may be reported. The penetrating, meticulous *critique*, neither descending nor condescending, which distinguished the reviews of modern poetry by Robert Graves and others thirty years ago, and by stress of which sympathetic notice was taken of E. E. Cummings but also of T. S. Eliot, is not at all paralleled by the journalistic trend of to-day, miserably equalitarian under cover of ideological gymnastics and other trick performances. However, interpretations of *The Waste Land* now vie with each other in a claim to be monumental or final, while in New

York *Cocktail Party* was an astounding success. The hungry sheep (Advanced or Scholarship) and their shepherds seem well enough provided here.

The human mind has a wonderful capacity for jumping stiles and bridging apparent non-sequiturs, and in spite of a blandly unhistorical, unanalytical approach to modern music, Walton and Rubbra and Rawsthorne are played and heard with something like enthusiasm by those who do not always know what or how much they enjoy. Yet operatic or analogous contacts are invaluable and highly desirable take-off points, just as they were even for Mozart and his concert-audiences, or for Wagner and his essentially listening-not-looking public. (Not looking: it would be a very rare Siegfried or Wotan who could count on his bevy of fainting women.) Two small illustrations of texture may serve as a general reminder of the dependence of a strong musical impression on local operatic tradition. The otherwise exotic *cantabile* phrases of the new soloist, the clarinet, in Mozart's last E flat Symphony are appreciably assisted by the recent clarinet illumination of the Countess' longing in "*Porgi amor*" and of the pathetic adolescence of "*Non so più*". In *Die Walküre* the Neapolitan Sixth, already an established trick of style, gathers new force when it has to underline phase after phase of Siegmund's hard-luck story, including the end of act II. By means of this trenchant cadence Wagner dries up what might otherwise be chromatic slither. So in more recent times, *Wozzeck* has bridged the gulf between the homely English ear and the wan waters of atonality. In this country Britten's music has conspicuously provided from an actual or imagined stage its own clear momentum for the introduction of bassoon refrain, recurrent Ground, or a startling variety of harmonic turns.

Rawsthorne has so far relied almost entirely on a purely musical appeal. The listener is left to decide whether the music is serious-didactic or energetic, brooding or cynical, exultantly gymnastic or expansively visionary. The prevailing "greyness" of an atonal medium has done nothing to lessen this kind of ambiguity. Also there is no major work whose impact on the common English ear may be taken for granted. Rawsthorne's craftsmanship has scarcely been publicised, apart from a few records. One Cheltenham appearance for a work does not make a perpetual summer any more than one I.S.C.M. award. Obvious historical contributions such as the composer's treatment of Variation have not been noticed. Yet Rawsthorne has kept faithfully to the instrumental track which he began to indent on the public and incidentally international ear in the Variations for two violins. He has steadily shown acute perceptions and a pronounced interest in structure and texture, in a now considerable succession of works for orchestra or solo-ensemble, all published, with a piano reduction of the orchestral score in the three main concertos, the executive study of which should promote precise and continuous memories of this elaborate music. A survey of Rawsthorne's achievement will be attempted here, with the diffidence that comes from knowing the risks of instructing the converted, and of projecting a shapeless mass of old-fogey obsessions into the nominally critical reception of a new and individual style. There can be no harm, however, in registering, as a sort of challenge, a few firm impressions from a perusal of the scores at a listener's own speed of harmonic reception and structural

integration, with a leisurely opportunity for precise listening-back which is denied in concert experience and is most expedient with so elusive a content. I shall assume no exact or comprehensive acquaintance with Rawsthorne's music or style, without implying that this is positively the normal state of things in intelligent listening society.¹ Life is short, initiative is rare—even among students!—and there are, after all, five or six composers in England alone, whose output and pronounced style are matter for special study.

We may consider the orchestral music first, beginning with the main works, the *Symphonic Studies* of 1938 and the four concertos which spread over the years 1942-47-48-49.² Their titles, brevity and variety suggest a composer who needs a free and informal atmosphere and does not aspire yet to large-scale symphonies and portentous works in general. Let us register a summary hearing. In all five works the most constant type of appeal is the recurrent refrain, enriched or positively alternating with Variations and *bravura* and, usually more incidentally, fugal passages. The tendency is to develop (with rhetorical changes of *tempo*) a single mood in each movement, and even the *Studies* show contrasts rather than a downright otherness of matter. While, then, the lay-out is carefully conceived and often distinctive, the main interest of the succession of ideas is dependent on the versatile manner in which a melodic line or Ground is deployed by free ornamentation in the classical-Viennese manner or by the fugal devices of augmentation and the like, or sheer counterpoint. Moreover, the concertos present a sequence of movements rather than a riveting whole. In this respect they have plenty of classical precedent and romantic support, apart from the lack of the assurance that a returning and characterized key can convey in a finale. The *Symphonic Studies* also employ a serial, rather than a symphonic method. Apart from such thematic development, the aural accent falls on the variant textures of recurring melodic phrases, orchestral blends and, above all, an energetic display of modern keyboard harmony and counterpoint or its orchestral equivalent.

Ex.1

Andante con moto e poco teneramente

Solo Vln

¹ Since I wrote this article, my attention has been drawn to two short articles on Rawsthorne by Colin Mason (*The Musical Times*, March and April, 1950). Mr. Mason writes trenchantly of the possibilities of Rawsthorne's harmonic texture, and in my estimate too slightly of his interest in structure; but I am inclined to agree with this critic that *Symphonic Studies* has not demonstrably been bettered yet, as an aesthetic whole, and I observe that he too is worried about the positive recurrences of thematic outline from one work to another.

² I wish to thank the publishers, the Oxford University Press, for score facilities and various information, and for permission to quote from the music.

The treatment of the orchestral *ensemble* is decidedly in favour of the wood and brass and percussion groups (including plucked, but not bowed strings). The old gibe that Wagner's orchestration sounds like an elaborate swell-organ cannot be levelled at Rawsthorne's instrumental polyphony; but in so far as it implies a lack of sympathy for string-tone, the criticism is truer of Rawsthorne than of Wagner. The characterizations of, for example, the bourgeois Pogner and the primitive Dutchman, and much more of the many ever-womanly creations of Wagnerian saga, would lose half their colour without the figures and atmosphere which the strings add to the wind scoring; and in wonderful relief to the striving of cane and lip reeds and vibrating strings appear the strings alone, not only for dreamers like Sachs and Siegmund, but for the ruthless storm which drives Siegmund to Hunding's hut. In Rawsthorne's scheme, while string-unison *bravura* is common (*Symphonic Studies*, 9 and 36,³ violin Concerto i, H), pure string-tone is so rare that I have not been able to find an instance worth considering. The comparison has been elaborated to suggest something missing in the Rawsthorne tradition; for the scope and well-nigh perfect homogeneity of the string *ensemble* must not be forgotten. Perhaps for the same reason I find the Concerto for string orchestra lacking in interest. On the other hand, the combination (*Symphonic Studies*, 13, cf. 22) of high muted-violin rhapsody, clarinet basic figure spotlighted by celesta overtones, and filling-in part for horns and muted trumpet is one of many early felicities



which assured the listener that here was an orchestral composer in control of his medium and more. Nothing need be added here on the mastery of the solo-instruments in the concertos, except to note that a *cantabile* sense is, surprisingly, most noticeable in the solo-part of the oboe Concerto. In the piano Concerto the percussive and harmonic scope of the piano are uppermost, alternating with an extended lyrical *cantilena* which is not by any analogy the expression of a singer. The solo-part of the violin Concerto is in a sense similar: it seems to accept a challenge to conceal one-line texture in a trenchant ubiquity, rather than to extend the violin's singing range.

We come to the most constant factors of expression, the melodic line and the harmony derived or attached. It is at once apparent that the whole chromatic scale is or may be drawn upon, but as a compendium of possible *alternative* degrees, more often than of transparent semitone modifications of a given degree

³ The numbered references here are to figures in the score, followed by the bar-interval if necessary.

or progression. Hindemith's construction of the scale from the harmonic series of the key-note (*Craft of Musical Composition*, vol. I, chapter ii) is suggestive. The upshot is that a key-centre may be defined at the outset and conclusion and other chosen points, but it can be, and frequently is, lost in a single bar. There are rarely any intermediate points of rest, and no regular substitutes for the dominant in cadences. Cross-sections of typical movement away from a key centre may be quoted.

Ex.3

a Allegro di bravura
 Vin.
 Vla.
 Basses
 add Cl.

b Allegro molto
 Piano
f con bravura etc.

c Adagio
 Fl.
 Solo Vin.
 Bsn. & Harp

The first, the principal subject of *Symphonic Studies*, is a partly contrapuntal gesture; a simple carpentry of theme and free bass, the latter somewhat amplified harmonically. The second, the opening of the piano Concerto, is an essentially harmonic flavour. The third contains a more elaborate scheme of passing chromatics, two notes thick. Two successive "pedal-points" provide, as so often, intermediate steps. So we pass from Ex. 3a to 5a, from 3b to 5b and 5c, and from 4 to 5d.

Ex.4
 Andante con moto
 Piano & W.W.
p
 plucked Str. & Piano

Definitely not an appendix to *The Oxford Harmony*, volume II. If it may be considered part of the next step after the polychromatic drift of the nineteenth century, the intermediate steps are far from obvious. The inner logic

would take nearly a book to bring down to the ground. But the alert and experienced ear is used to being beguiled by the unexpected. If the listener approaches Rawsthorne's texture from a standpoint no more technically advanced than the acceptance of the "appalling frankness" with which (from the F minor Symphony onwards) Vaughan Williams has seasoned his chromatic extensions of modal linear counterpoint, his ear will not be discouraged by the younger composer's characteristically capricious sequences and absence of tonality, because they reveal a sense of succession in the end, more often than not, tortuous and singular as they appear at first. In the cant term of a past generation, Rawsthorne shows "depth".

Ex. 5

a Andante con moto Violin Concerto, I. R.
Fl. Cl. (1st)
Vin.
p dolce espress.
Bsn.

b Vivace Piano Concerto, 80.4
F.O.
Ibid. 78.9

c Piano
Sres.

d Adagio Violin Concerto, II. C
Solo Vin.
mp
Hn.
Harp

In the common sense, depth is not desired of a rising composer. He should, rather, be exploring hidden lanes and cuttings, and turning up the ground generally, not reaping monumental harvests. From the start Rawsthorne has shown an alert craftsmanship—without any funny business—and while his progress has been chiefly in the control of varied terrain in a region which thrives on casual contrasts of atmosphere, his methods of construction and syntax have displayed the continuity and critical ear of a consistently musical personality. If the violin Concerto is no pronounced advance on the piano Concerto, the richer and rather more solid content of either movement is promising. Conventionally, one awaits a symphony⁴ to prove an invention that is not too dependent on a salient contrast of medium and power to hold together

⁴ I regret not having been able to include the Symphony within the scope of this article which was completed before the work was performed or in any way accessible. If its concentration is *striking*, so also is its brevity. It can scarcely be said that the organic content of the work places it in a new category. [For some account of the Symphony from another pen see pp. 150-1 (ED.).]

its harmonically "curious" phases. But there is no telling where and when a major impulse will arise in an artist's life, nor is its incidence a matter for music criticism. The romantic attitude was a sound one. The heap of "lucky" major works that were written to order has done nothing to disprove the exceedingly complicated and unconscious processes by which a stirring in the brain becomes in one case matter for an orchestral Season, metropolitan notices in the Press, and perhaps a few lines in the next history of music if the symposiast is awake; and in another case a few minutes' interval-music, or something more serious and seasonable, which yet proves to be no more than a jog

Ex. 6

1 *Maestoso*
Wood & H.

1a *Allegro di bravura*
Vin.

1b *Allegro piacevole*
Fl.
Vin.

1c *Allegretto*
Fl.
C.A.

1d *Allegro di bravura*
p Vin.

1f *Trom. 8 & 16ft.*
Tuba

3 *poco se marcato*
Trom.

The musical score for Ex. 6 consists of several staves. Staves 1 and 1a show a transition from a slow, majestic wood and horn piece to a fast, brave violin piece. Staves 1b and 1c show a flute playing a pleasant, lively melody, with a cello and double bass accompaniment. Staves 1d and 1f show a violin playing a fast, brave melody, with a tuba accompaniment. Staff 3 shows a trombone playing a moderately marked melody.

for the section of a movement (to be revised beyond recognition later) in—what? Time alone will show. We know this to have been the patient experience and practice of Bach and Beethoven (as against Handel and Schubert), and the common factor is a proud awareness of the distinction between efficient craftsmanship and that wider lift of the mind which we call art, between the topical and the inevitable. Whether, at a given moment, after art produced within certain limits, more of the same kind is to be given to the public or nothing, is the real concern of every composer who can live to write more than he writes to live. The sensitive listener will accordingly be content with *nothing* in season, even with nothing more at all. Better that than a lowering of standards to fill an imaginary gap in production. It seems necessary to insist on this baffling factor of creative urge in a world where a continuous and seasonable supply on a grand scale can easily pass as an unfailing and superlative creativeness, and its absence as a positive lack. There are in fact many

degrees of heat, but for every composer there is always a minimum, below which no chemical reaction can be recognized. (Even a prosaic article like the present one cannot start without some molecular fusion.) How often intimations shall be carried to a stage of illumination is a personal matter which can be improved (see Graham Wallas, *The Art of Thought*) but not controlled. An artist's business is ultimately to know, not make, himself.

Let us turn, then, to individual orchestral works without questioning further their complete lack of supporting literary or other associations, their free-fantasia and variation trend, their atonal methods, their lack of sustained melody, and their brevity.

The *Symphonic Studies* are broadly a sequence of symphonic variations on one main theme, a downward stretch of a seventh with an answering curve of varying detail, of which Ex. 3a above is the first full version. "Variations" must be understood in more senses than one. Bach's variations (*Goldberg* and *Von Himmel hoch*) may be borne in mind first, as typifying a rich blend, in turn, of recurring rhythmic span, here variable in length, and of ingenious thematic development. The main theme is fashioned and re-fashioned, as principal curve or background figure, in five main stages. The theme and its five chief emanations are summarized on p. 93, with the main counter-subject and a third theme. These are distributed as follows:

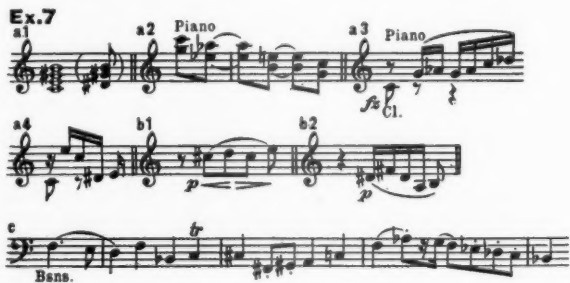
	<i>Tempo</i>			<i>Themes</i>		<i>Key-centres</i>
(i)	<i>Maestoso</i>	..	..	..	I	B
	<i>Allegro di bravura</i>	..	..	..	Ia, Ib (2, Iax)	
	<i>Maestoso</i>	..	..	..	I	
(ii)	<i>Allegretto</i>	..	..	..	Ic } I	B and C
					2 }	
(iii)	<i>Allegro di bravura</i>	..	..	..	Id, Ia, Iax	B
(iv)	<i>Lento</i>	..	..	..	2 }	?G, moving off to
				..	Ic }	
(v)	<i>Allegro piacevole</i>	..	..	..	Ie, Ie diminished, 3	B
				..	Ie, If	
	<i>Tempo Primo (maestoso)</i>	..	..	..	I	
	<i>Allegro molto</i>					

The first *Allegro* is naturally concerned with defining I, but it also contains (after a premonitory semi-quaver bustle in the woodwind, as the basis of a very prickly oboe-horn sequence) an ascending progression of dropping thirds (6 in the score), from which the lovely theme of the *Allegretto* develops. This is an exquisite meditation, begun by the flute in a Stravinsky accent and crystallized by the tenor oboe's announcement of 2 in the unsymphonic tone exploited by Franck (after Berlioz' shepherd?). The movement, however, reaches a grand climax before subsiding to the dreamy contemplation of Ic. The next two sections amplify these two expository movements, somewhat straining the original impulses. The *Allegro* now has a pronounced cadence, which favours

a leisurely continuation in the slower *tempo*. This is sufficiently long-drawn to make the fifth section in the nature of an *Erklärung* in the Sibelius manner, if not of an actual restatement. It is relieved by diminution (45) and then by a fugued appearance of 3, chiefly in the brass, so that the return of 1e in the clarinet, *dolce*, is effective, but the brass canon of 1f an almost inevitable sequel; after which a *maestoso-allegro* exit achieves a *tière de Picardie* with easy emphasis and a splendid brass tone. The brass fugue is a daring but palatable insertion of new matter, and the device recurs in later works. Altogether the alternation of moods makes good ground for symphonic thinking on two alternative and connected planes, illuminated by the interplay of orchestrally homophonic and contrapuntal full *tuttis*, wind combinations with or without strings, and special blends. If the *Lento* drags rather readily, the consequent novelty of 1e is just enough to hold its fugal episode and so prepare for a grand but more brilliant finish. In short, the impulse of each of the five movements (each starting on a new side in the H.M.V. records, C 3542-4) is strong enough in its context to carry the listener past the ear-twisting polyphony.

The piano Concerto was originally for strings and percussion. The full orchestral version was produced at the Promenade Concerts, 1942, *annus non mirabilis*. There are the usual three movements, each more or less uniform in mood. In the opening *Capriccio* the piano at once establishes its relation to the orchestra as an energetic and indeed incessantly ubiquitous *continuo*-part, emerging later (3) in a more dominant rôle. Its omnipresence throughout the exposition is balanced by long spells of orchestral phenomena later (after 12 and 20). After these, the piano can without intrusion move quickly to the foreground for the final *Presto*. Interplay of piano and orchestral texture is promoted by the emphasis of rhythmic factors on each side.

The basic material may be quoted. It is not easy to decide whether it should simply be numbered throughout, as of separate and equivalent phrases or aspects, or grouped as components of successive subjects in the classical manner. I have plumped for the latter, while noting the low relief of contrast. Where semiquavers prevail, their cessation (b1) is striking.



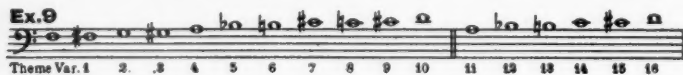
It will readily be perceived that a1 is a recurring stroke of "tough" harmonic assertion for its own sake, a2 is a whole-tone figure, doubled in fourths, a3 exploits semitones, a4 bends down sharply and might descend less steeply;

b1 is a simple curve of which it would be spoil-sport to anticipate the many variants; *b2* clearly derives, in its context and in itself, from *a4*, and is at once shaped by the piano into decorative figures. Theme *c*, having considered imitations of *The Art of Fugue* (No. 8), acquires a fresh kink for its full announcement by the bassoons, and its sustained "line" forms a marked contrast to the opening *toccata*-work. It is interesting how effectively this dry figure is hammered on the piano strings, and how easily it is then absorbed in the *a1* chord (with the fifth now perfect and consonant with the bass, and a derivative of *b1* in the lower strings); and after an eloquent and mysterious orchestral interlude, echoing an episode in the finale of Vaughan Williams' sixth Symphony (1948), the kettle-drum roll can break into the initial primitive summons to harmony, now a common chord of resolution, not the original clash of tone. The restatement is thus quickly swept into a *coda* in $\frac{6}{8}$, based on the falling intervals of *a2* and finally on *a4*, scattered over a tonic pedal (tonic, C). The obvious precedent for this fierce, ruthless movement is the *Toccata* of the Vaughan Williams piano Concerto. One may indeed ask what sustained *cantabile*, or what grandeur of orchestral muster, could possibly have come from a rising English composer around 1941, whatever the previous history of the Concerto. Here, at least, is an alertly rhythmic, capricious, brittle movement, brilliant in detail rather than overwhelming in sequence.

The *Chaconne*, on the other hand, makes a deep impression, and is so far the only independent slow movement to give general satisfaction. It takes an eight-bar Ground, veiled in brass and symmetrical but kinked, and builds



sixteen variations on it, with a compelling sense of progression not found in the traditional Divisions on a Ground. The order of succession is artificial but musically coherent. The variations move from key-centres which together form an almost steady ascent in semitones in two stages, divided by a short free episode (ending at 44). The last essential bass-note of each variation usually proves the dominant (in the most traditional sense) of the next tonic, as in the Ground. The first stage is not quite a continuous ascent of tonics. After plodding from F to B, the key-centre pushes on to C sharp but then falls back to C and ascends from there. The progression from the next C sharp to D, followed by the free episode, has thus a considerable sense of terminus, and when the second series has moved by step from A to D, the holding of D seems inevitable. The fundamental progression of the *Chaconne* can thus be tabulated as follows, and once it is felt, the balance of 10 and 6 is clear. The variations beguile the listener, first, by such chromatically ascending tonality,



supported by contrapuntal figures in piano or orchestra; then by ignoring the original bass in bars 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 (var. 6—add 33 to find the figure in the score), with a poignantly liquescent upper harmony, and occasionally by altering the directive last note (var. 6, 7, 10), as piquantly disturbing as the displacement of the perfect cadence in some variations of the finale of Brahms' fourth Symphony. The absorption of the substance of the Ground (by diminution) in a pathetic descent against the final tonic chord, is a happy stroke. The rest is decorative or dynamic detail, including an almost lyrical piano line in var. 10 (see Ex. 4). Planned but not too predictable, the movement conceals the joinery by other art, and the total effect is remarkably moving. Not far from Bach's *Crucifixus*? It must not be assumed that wayward movement or liquid symmetry sounds no depths, after what Bach did with a flute in an apparently set *aria*, in the condemnation scene in the *St. Matthew Passion*—not to mention Verdi. Suffice it to say that, from the muted brass start onwards, desolation and suffering have their monument here.

The final *Tarantella* reverts to the first of the descending notes in the cadence of the *Chaconne* and thus establishes C sharp (the mean between C and D, the previous main keys) as the new tonic. The plastic first subject is soon challenged by what proves to be a second group, of which the first theme is the most striking, but the second has more expansion to it and the third later



combines with the first subject. A vigorous piano part takes the second subject into various keys, in the middle of things. The restatement is surprisingly enriched by new orchestral matter (68, 73) but finishes quietly and easily with the first subject, with the initial chord of the Concerto as a point to lean on (A major plus F) before making C sharp the home note. The *Tarantella* suffers a little from anticipation in the *coda* of the *Capriccio*. Its rhythm crops up again in the oboe Concerto. It is a fascinating, pliable rhythm but easily overdone. There is a certain lack of distinction about this finale: it does not seem to go beyond one *affekt*. The Concerto will always be serviceable where 20 minutes need to be filled by pianistic bravery and orchestral *finesse*, but not to give solid backing to an otherwise picaresque programme. Nevertheless, the steady neglect of the Concerto in favour of Beethoven No. 3 and other even more overplayed classics, not to mention some truly superfluous revivals, is no credit to public taste or producer's initiative. (Apparently the person who is last and least consulted is the concert-pianist. He is just a hireling.)

The Concerto for oboe and strings (1947) is a simple, straightforward composition, lasting a quarter of an hour. There is not much blend to be had from that amplified double-reed and the smoother surface of string-tone. The two must alternate or be lumped together. The first movement is a miniature

French overture. The orchestra announce a tense theme (*maestoso appassionato*) with a half-close on what proves to be the dominant in an orthodox sense; into this the oboe projects a forecast of the pernickety *Allegro* to follow. In the latter the oboe occupies the centre, with the rising fourth of its C-D flat-F-E *motif*, but the lower strings work the theme in as counterpoint to a hang-over of the *maestoso*, and in reply the oboe gives out a more lyrical rising-fifth phrase, which is taken up briefly by the cello. Thus the oboe's dominance in the returning *maestoso*, restoring C, is just palatable. Especially if she has nice arms, as the vicar's wife said. However, it is only for 11 bars.

In the second movement, *Allegretto con Morbidezza*, the honours are more divided. The equivocating dominant of the opening is exploited by both parties in a Rondo. The oboe contributes one episode, marked *doloroso*, and

Ex.11



rather weak in content, and the orchestra another, in a piquant syncopated rhythm for which the oboe eventually finds an elaborate tune. An echo of this rhythm similarly despatches the oboe to a final concentration on the initial descent of a semitone (or rather of its second version, a descending minor second, a real interval) over a painfully discordant "tonic" chord. The finale has plenty of matter for its rather longer span, and the contrasts of colour appear in full force. Further, the recapitulation of *b* in the oboe with *a1* in

Ex.12

the strings is a nice provisional solution to a wayward episode, admirably confirmed by *a2* augmented in full orchestral power. When the acting trombones gain this now rather pompous theme (altering the last major third to a diminished fourth), we know the brake is on, and it remains to make arrival at the home station gracefully eventful—an oboe *cadenza*, orchestral suspense (double-pedal), Neapolitan Sixth *bravura* (!) and a tremendously diatonic finish (bars 10-11), oddly anticipated in the string Quartet. The underlying harmony of *a1* is the taut seventh of the piano Concerto, and it retains its pull here. Altogether this is one of Rawsthorne's quarters-of-an-hour, trenchant and witty, leaving a pleasant taste if the oboeist is very good and not too anxious to hold the stage in the *cadenzas*.

However, in the violin Concerto (1948) Rawsthorne was obviously happier. Violin concertos manifestly present special problems of structure and balance, of which the classical and modern solutions alike may become stereotyped. Nevertheless, with Walton, Britten, Dyson and Moeran before him—not to mention Sibelius, Bartók and (violin and strings) Vaughan Williams—Rawsthorne was spared the necessity of overcoming the prejudice that there have been no fiddle concertos since Brahms'. The salient factor is that orchestral violin technique, and indeed orchestral technique generally, have reached a stage which defies solo-violin virtuosity to show difference in kind and thus to justify the necessary reduction of orchestral power. (Hence the rise of viola concertos.) The violin is now *primus inter pares* with special privileges, and the real problem is to write music which calls in turn for this violin-and-others texture and (as before) violin-solo interludes, with balancing periods for others-with-violin and orchestral *tutti*s of varying dimensions. From the point of view of violin facilities, Forsyth's statement that the violin has an essentially diatonic range needs qualification. It assumes that there are eight fixed notes in a given ascending or descending scale. This convention has ceased to bear the stamp of the mind's custom. The violin's scope is that of the harp—the major scale of C flat with optional sharpening or double-sharpening of each of the eight notes—with reference to any given key-centre, substantial or fleeting. Thus Rawsthorne's technique, of alternative degrees within close range but not usually in *immediate* proximity, is quite practicable on the violin. It merely necessitates the control of many unfamiliar orders of interval. (Cf. the violin part at E in the first movement.) But this is sufficiently new on the violin to constitute a fresh and unobtrusive factor of contrapuntal decoration, along with more palpable broken-octave sequences, double-stopping and rapid movement. The solo-part is thus more on the level for the listener expecting acrobatics, rhythmic and melodic; the violinist's impulsive fingers reach D *in alt.*, but there is nothing of the Brahms Concerto's fondness for basking in the altitudes above A. Yet athletic prowess and a keen musicianship can both find satisfaction.

The Concerto has, moreover, a "motto" theme, which lends itself to brooding introduction, *cadenza* and sprightly *bravura*. It is a little puzzling that this rise of a semitone and a minor third, declining a semitone, is so like the main motive (with *major* third) of *Cortèges* and the *Allegro* of the oboe Concerto, not to mention the Quartet. (The Margaret- or love-motive of Liszt's *Faust* Symphony appears to be a possible ancestor. But since its vital descent of a seventh is replaced here by its harmonic inversion, a semitone rise, its shape is considerably altered, and it could not possibly be termed romantic, erotic or whatever is read into that haunting and pervasive | s': ra d' | d' t.) The motto is, rather, a recurrent figure of cohesion, purely functional. "Motto" is too strong a word. Yet it is this which naturally crops up in the first *cadenza*, and at the beginning and end of the second movement. The point has been laboured here—but in fact an introductory theme and section to two movements, each marked by several changes of *tempo*, is a somewhat confusing mannerism. A "motto" must either create disturbance or convey the power

of absorbing new sets of themes in itself. A subsidiary recurring theme is rather a problem to the listener; a diversion, yet a recovery.

Apart from this, the course of each movement is respectively clear. (Their sum will be discussed later.) The initial *adagio* having exhibited the equivocal nature of the motto, the main material disposes itself in two *tempi* and metres, with the violin gradually asserting its personality from *a3* onwards, balanced

Ex.13

Molto adagio espressivo
Solo Vln. Vln. Fl.
a1 Andante con moto
Solo Vln.
a2 Ob. Vln. Fl. (4ft.) Ve. (4ft.)
a3 Solo Vln.
b Più mosso
Ob. H. Vln. (4ft.)

by an Elgarian resurgence of orchestra (around *G* in the score), which fructifies in the full orchestral delivery of *b*.⁵ How times have changed becomes apparent when the violin takes up the theme *in alt.*, accompanied by liquid counterpoint on the clarinet and muted trumpet. Retardation and augmentation of *b* promote a *cadenza*, compact of the motto, *a3* and *a2*, from which a restatement, at first orchestral, emerges quietly but tangentially, without the solo-violin continuity of the concertos of Mendelssohn and Sibelius. The violin enters with *a2*, omits *a3*, brings in *b*, and resumes the motto to restore the tonality of *G*. The texture is close and studied throughout; it would be a sharp-eared listener who could play many bars after one or two hearings, and it must be understood that the quotations are marks of identity for a perpetually varied harmonic cluster. The burden of first appeal therefore falls very considerably on the soloist. The strings are kept busy rather than interested.

The second movement employs a similar contrast of mood, now in reverse order of *tempi*, but the balance of effect is different. Here *a* is fugued and completely orchestral, leaving the violin to introduce *b*. Theme *b*, besides

Ex.14

a Allegro
Trom.
b Adagio
Solo Vln.
a1 Allegro moderato
Ben.
b1 Allegro risoluto
diminished
Solo Vln.

⁵ For an old fogey, this emphasis here of *new* matter is heavy going; much more heavy going than a classical *tutti*, which either has appeared before or else is cheerfully general and solvent. The slight precedent of the march-theme in Beethoven's triple Concerto, with its special solo-elements, is no real comparison. Nor is the explosive rhythmic *tutti* in the ebullient scherzo of Walton's viola Concerto, or the folkly (and much later-placed) orchestral entry in Sibelius' violin Concerto. Theme *b* here has been described as the inversion of the motto. If so, it is a pity! It was not made for inversion. This kind of subtle derivation is in any case as heavy going as the appearance of a new theme.

relating generally to *a* so that it passes as an alternative later, has a pronounced line (cf. the finale of the oboe Concerto for the swift relation of *d* and *m* (here *fa*) as key-centres). It soon diminishes to an *allegro* version, with much antiphony and repartee and incidental recollection of the fugue-subject in Walton's Symphony (finale). There is a considerable *Lento* movement in the middle, with a new theme which encounters much chromatic counterpoint in thirds on the woodwind, and combines *b*. When the *Allegro* inevitably returns, it is not to restore *a*, which has been well and truly through the mill of fugal exposition and counter-exposition, but its now established alternative, *b* diminished. It remains to de-diminish *b* (bass strings) before the orchestral violins proclaim the *coda* in a challenge to the soloist's technical aplomb. The simple rejoinder is confirmed in a blunt cadential phrase, linking the pentatonic period with a modernist conflation of a discord and its resolution.

By such means the composer substitutes a two-prong balance of *tempi*—qualified *Andante* and *Meno mosso* and qualified *Allegro risoluto*—for the more straightforward succession of three movements in pronounced contrast. A rejection of the *cantabile* movement may be discerned; possibly a criticism (in spite of the dedication of the work) of Walton's nostalgic fits. Delivery will have a corresponding problem of presentation to an audience which still takes its cue from the devotees of Beethoven and (deplorably as regards the slow movement) of Mendelssohn. But Rawsthorne's initiative justifies itself, especially (to my ears) in the second movement, and there is no feeling of experiment or technical hesitation about the new development. One warning may be uttered: this two-*tempo* form of expression (recalling the *Symphonic Studies*) is becoming a mannerism, and is not to be confused with sonata-form. The uniformity of the piano Concerto movements and the richness of the violin Concerto must somehow be fused!

The Concerto for string orchestra (1949) may be mentioned briefly here. The first movement is, somewhat unexpectedly, a kind of sonata-form, in which the second subject is distinguished by solo-descants the first time and general counterpoint the second. The first subject has a pronounced curve and is reasonably expansive. The significantly short second movement, *lento e mesto*, has a grave principal mood, not unlike the finale of Vaughan Williams' *A London Symphony*, and a declamatory, mysterious interlude. The last movement combines a broad main refrain with an extended middle section of partly fresh material and partly development (augmentation, fugue) of the main refrain and a derivative of the first movement. The proportions are odd and the main refrain thins in repetition. This Concerto, as already suggested, suffers audibly from being confined to strings. It has already attracted string orchestras of quality, and not only in England, but I am surprised it has been placed beside the Elgar *Introduction and Allegro* by at least one responsible critic. It is an interesting comparison, because the composer of *Cockaigne*, too, did not readily orchestrate for strings only. But looking through the Elgar work recalls passage after passage of resonant, vibrant polyphony and exquisite *tessitura*, of the Elgarian pomp nicely avoided. I find it difficult to say the same of Rawsthorne's Concerto.

The two overtures, *Street Corner* and *Cortèges*, naturally make a more direct, or at least a more popular appeal. *Street Corner*, after bluntly recalling the piano Concerto-chord (with the third, not the bass, as tonic), announces a perky tune, of which the sequential second half lends itself especially to stress and development, including augmentation. An auxiliary phrase is introduced by the woodwind after the first *tutti* (F). This Overture is recorded (H.M.V. C 3502) and should appeal to the children of all ages as piquant corner-boy music. The augmentation is well manipulated, but coming where it does, as an apparent interlude, gives the shape of the Overture an odd bulge. *Cortèges* (I.S.C.M., 1945) is more important, with its decisive motto-theme, *adagio* melody and developed fugue in two stages, separated by a considerable interlude-tune:

Ex. 15

Allegro molto vivace



The fugue is surely overdone, with its fussy counter-exposition in too facile double-fugue, augmentation, inversion, and the expansion of one phrase. The augmentation of the *adagio* melody is effective, but now reminds us that it is a device to which the composer has since been prone. Bach, by the way, used augmentation most sparingly, and then always as the background or basis of independent polyphony. Plain, uppermost augmentation he left mainly to Beethoven ("In gloria Dei Patris"), not a precedent for *any* avowed augmentation. As a means of variation, it is dangerously apt to expose its subject to an analysis it cannot bear, as Bach may have discovered in many a chorale prelude. Again, the open-air quality and brilliant scoring of the Overture will endear it to listeners in general, but it must not be played too often; the structure is somewhat grotesque (or baroque, if you prefer a more fashionable, though much misused, French word).

There is no call at this stage for a detailed survey of the chamber music. The broad trends of Rawsthorne's structure and texture have been indicated and there should be no serious difficulty in assembling the piano, clarinet and string quartet which between them could cover the Variations for two violins (1937), the Variations for quartet (1939), the Quartet for clarinet and strings (1948), and the piano Sonatina and the cello-piano Sonata (1949). Briefly, then, the two-violin work at once shows a confident atonality and an experience of Variation which no classicist will identify as such. Thematic development is exploited in the interests of changing mood in a restless harmonic medium. The quartet-movement (severely misentitled string quartet) is a masterly and more melodious example of variation-writing, technically unified by melodic or rhythmic line and emotionally, again, of remarkable variety. The recently published clarinet Quartet has a *Moderato* for first movement, a *Poco lento* of under 50 bars, and a considerable finale emerging from it. The *Moderato* hangs mainly round the initial clarinet phrase, whose delicate *cantabile* returns

quietly at the end of the Quartet; that is, the interest lies in the varied contrapuntal and harmonic texture and context in which the theme appears. The slight *Lento* relies overmuch for structural interest on the mere antiphony of clarinet solo-work and string-trio incident. In the finale (*allegro risoluto*) the clarinet is almost consistently fused with the strings in a kind of sonata-rondo,

Ex.18



where the principal theme keeps developing. The clarinet-dominated epilogue thus satisfactorily rounds off a busy movement, contrapuntal rather than melodic in main interest. But the strings, once more, have too much filling-in to do, and too many musical scraps: they are quite good instruments of music, and quite a good *ensemble*, on their own!

The piano Sonatina combines a prelude on an old curve (B-C-E flat-D), a *Lento* of under 50 bars with a short *Poco più mosso* interlude, and a scherzo movement (*allegretto con malinconia*) leading into a sort of Hopak with a lyrical interlude.⁶ The rhythmic and harmonically trenchant scope of the piano is decidedly uppermost, and arouses the speculation, does the composer play this sort of thing while he is waiting for his tea? (I doubt if I would if I could.) It cannot be said that this work provides the critic with new material to any considerable extent, either in form or content. The cello-piano Sonata employs a now half-familiar curve as motto for its three movements; salient

Ex.17



in the prologue and first subject of the first movement, introductory in the second, a miniature rondo, and salient again in the epilogue, which balances the prologue. The finale-tune is adumbrated in the *Adagio* in the manner of Beethoven's E flat Concerto (*finale*), yet cadential in feeling—a new way to pay debts! The middle *Abbandonatamente* of the first movement, and the finale up to the epilogue, seem more exciting than the main matter of the first and second movements. The cello is treated sympathetically throughout.

⁶ At the first London performance it was difficult to follow the movements because they came without any break: the second appeared to belong to the first, and after that anything might be anything. Performers are asked to give the listener a chance in future.

There is a popular idea that music is a spontaneous activity and not meant to be discussed, any more than religion or politics. This is unfortunate and, to be candid, backward. If there were more Christian theology for tea, there might be less mental ill-health and social misfits. Again, those who have most consistently assumed that a daily-weekly awareness of political issues is the concern of every citizen can claim most credit for the general perception that Korea is far from being a country "of which we know very little", or in the same category as Formosa. While the spread of unnecessary information about music is not criticism or education, yet the critical and positive acceptance of new music, as part of the culture of the many or the few, cannot begin until some facts of reception have been selected on paper and put in some order. Music means many things to different listeners. An exchange of "hearing-set" is an almost indispensable check on subjective impressions. What has been written here may at various points shock many readers, the composer amongst others, but he can always reply with his own statement of the musical values of his music, in so far as these can be expressed in words. It is customary to refer in this connection (consciously or unconsciously) to butterflies' wings. But botanists are not commonly considered vandals; and in a general way there is everything to be said for the old Scholes dictum: "Music can no more suffer [from discussion] than can the Equator, of which Sydney Smith complained that somebody spoke disrespectfully".

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Mátyás Seiber and his *Ulysses*

BY

MOSCO CARNER

Ulysses, a cantata for tenor solo, chorus and orchestra, is based on a text taken from James Joyce's remarkable novel of that title. It was written in 1946-47 and received its first performance at a Morley College concert on 27th May, 1949, since when it has been broadcast several times and is to be performed at the I.S.C.M. Festival at Frankfurt in June.¹ The work created a profound and, in certain respects, unique impression and there is no doubt that in it Seiber, who is now in his middle forties, has written the most outstanding work of his career so far. *Ulysses* not only shows the consummation of his mature technical style, but advances to a sphere of thought and sentiment of which he had given us but few glimpses in his immediately preceding compositions.² In casting a retrospective glance at the totality of his work before *Ulysses*, the picture that presented itself was that of an eminent, resourceful craftsman—the term is used here in its pre-nineteenth-century connotation—whose strong points were structure, design and cogent musical thinking. One admired in his music an intellectual clarity and strength, an unerring sense of direction and an absolute certainty as to the form and means employed. Though a direct pupil of Kodály, Seiber's essential style proclaimed him a disciple of Bartók. There was, however, an element that appeared insufficiently developed: a sense of poetry and of subjective expression which would lend the music a more emotional and personal significance, and thus gain for it a wider appeal. Seiber seemed to address himself chiefly to our intellect and less to our imagination. A change was noticeable for the first time in his *Notturmo* of 1944. Here the accent was no longer so exclusively laid on the formal-technical aspect—an atmospheric, or better, evocative element entered the music, loosening Seiber's intellectual terseness in favour of a relatively more sensuous and lyrical note. The *Notturmo* was a mood-picture, not emotional but emotive, that is to say, it suggested a conception in which the primary incentive still seemed intellectual but in its artistic projection produced emotional overtones. If *Ulysses* shows fundamentally the same approach, there is, however, this difference that in it the composer has allowed a wider scope for the evocative and emotive, to the extent of making these elements the exclusive stimulus in one or two numbers. To put it in another way, if the very choice of the text argues an unaltered preference for the intellectual incentive over the emotional, the music, however, proves that the composer was able to distil from his words a poetic substance which I believe to be the chief reason for the lasting impression the work has made.

¹ The vocal score is published by Schott & Co., Ltd. (London), to whom I am indebted for permission to quote the music examples. I also wish to acknowledge my thanks to John Lane, The Bodley Head, Ltd., for their kind permission to reprint Joyce's text.

² *Fantasia Concertante* for violin and string orchestra (1943-44); *Notturmo* for horn and string orchestra (1944); *Fantasy* for string quartet, flute and horn (1945).

In deciding to set a cantata to an excerpt from Joyce's book Seiber accepted a formidable challenge. That he has answered it so successfully may be taken as the measure of his mature creative imagination. In order to bring home the difficulty of his musical proposition and also to facilitate reference in the later analysis, I quote below the full text of the Cantata. It is taken from Joyce's penultimate chapter, in which Ulysses-Bloom returns home with his young friend Stephen Dedalus and embarks on meditations ranging over an immense sphere of human experience. It is the middle of the night, with Stephen about to leave. Bloom sees him out of his house, and it is here that the Cantata begins:

I. "What spectacle confronted them when they, first the host, then the guest, emerged silently, doubly dark, from obscurity by a passage from the rere of the house into the penumbra of the garden?

The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit.

II. With what meditations did he accompany his demonstration to his companion of various constellations?

Meditations of evolution increasingly vaster: of the moon invisible in incipient lunation, approaching perigee: of the infinite lattiginous scintillating uncondensed milky way: of Sirius, 10 light years (57,000,000,000,000 miles) distant and in volume 900 times the dimension of our planet: of Arcturus: of the precession of equinoxes: of Orion with belt and sextuple sun theta and nebula in which 100 of our solar systems could be contained: of moribund and nascent new stars such as Nova in 1901: of our system plunging towards the constellation of Hercules . . . ever-moving from immeasurably remote eons to infinitely remote futures in comparison with which the years, three-score and ten, of allotted human life formed a parenthesis of infinitesimal brevity.

III. Were there obverse meditation of involution increasingly less vast?

Of the eons of geological periods recorded in the stratifications of the earth: of the myriad minute entomological organic existences concealed in cavities of the earth, beneath removable stones, in hives and mounds, of microbes, germs, bacteria, bacilli, spermatozoa: of the incalculable trillions of billions of millions of imperceptible molecules contained by cohesion of molecular affinity in a single pinhead: of the universe of human serum constellated with red and white bodies, themselves universes of void space constellated with other bodies, each, in continuity, its universe of divisible component bodies of which each was again divisible in divisions of redivable component bodies, dividends and divisors ever diminishing without actual division till, if the progress were carried far enough, nought nowhere was never reached.

IV. Which various features of the constellations were in turn considered?

The attendant phenomena of eclipses, solar and lunar, from immersion to emersion, abatement of wind, transit of shadow, taciturnity of winged creatures: emergence of nocturnal or crepuscular animals, persistence of infernal light, obscurity of terrestrial waters, pallor of human beings.

V. His logical conclusion, having weighed the matter and allowing for possible error?

That it was not a heaven tree, not a heavengrot, not a heavenbeast, nor a heavenman. That it was a Utopia, . . . a past which possibly had ceased to exist as a present before its future spectators had entered actual present existence."

Taken by itself the text, in which, incidentally, the composer has for an obvious reason made several cuts, might almost have stepped out of a text-book on natural science. It is little short of being a scientific enumeration of phenomena appertaining to astronomy, physics and biology. What was here, one first wonders, that could have fired a composer's fancy? But Seiber's setting of seemingly so unpromising a text has its precedents.³ Modern opera and oratorio have provided us with instances in which music is successfully harnessed to an abstract or merely factual text though, it must be added, such passages are usually woven into a tissue of dramatic and lyrical writing.⁴ The intellectual *tour-de-force* of basing a whole work on such a text is rare. True, this proposition has intrigued several composers before Seiber. Rameau declared himself ready to set the *Journal d'Hollande*, and Tchaikovsky saw musical possibilities in an advertisement for corn-plasters! Richard Strauss maintained that a professional composer should be able to set acceptable music to a list of laundry articles and an income-tax demand—thinking, no doubt, of the domestic idyll suggested by the first and the stern drama implied in the second. And there are Milhaud and Eissler to prove the inspirational power of such somewhat unpoetic texts as a catalogue of agricultural implements and newspaper clippings. Seiber is thus in good company. The great difference, however, is that with him the attempt was made not in a spirit of frivolous *bravado* but to produce a serious and well-considered work of art.

What inspired him in Joyce's text was, as the music clearly proves, far less Bloom's arid meditations than the nocturnal setting of the scene and the sentiments underlying it: the feeling of utter loneliness and insignificance which human beings experience when confronted with the vastness of the cosmos and its inscrutable mysteries; the sense of frustration and futility when Bloom recognizes that his meditations lead to one conclusion only: "*that it was a Utopia . . . a past which possibly ceased to exist as a present before its future spectators had entered actual present existence*".

If that represented to Seiber the emotional substratum of the scene, there was also its atmospheric aspect to be made use of: the pallid darkness of the summer night and the cold oscillating light of the stars. (To judge from the *Notturmo* and the string quartet *Fantasy*, nocturnal moods appear to have a special appeal for the composer.) And last, there is the verbal music of certain sentences which beyond their intellectual meaning must inevitably impress themselves on a musician's ear, such as "*The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit*", the alliterative "*nought nowhere was never reached*" and so on—lines that, as so often with Joyce, must be read aloud in order to disclose their sensuous beauty. Yet even allowing for such musical *stimuli* as sentiment, atmosphere and verbal sound, it is no exaggeration to describe as a feat of the imagination a setting which not only makes perfect sense *qua* music but interprets Joyce's words in terms of a truly poetic quality.

³ I should make it clear, however, that the composer wholly disagrees with my view as to the uninspiring quality of the better part of his text.

⁴ Cf. *Intermezzo* by R. Strauss; Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, and Hindemith's oratorio, *Das Unaufhörliche*, to mention works that come immediately to mind.

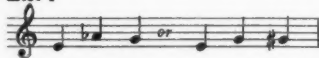
Corresponding to the five paragraphs of the text, the Cantata is divided into five movements:

- I. *The Heaventree*
- II. *Meditations of Evolution increasingly vaster*
- III. *Obverse Meditations of Involution*
- IV. *Nocturne—Intermezzo*
- V. *Epilogue*.

Since the prevailing mood underlying Joyce's scene is static and atmospheric, three movements (I, IV, V) are slow, lyrical and evocative and may be described as *Nocturnes*, though only No. IV is explicitly thus entitled. Nos. II and III present, in contrast, a dramatic interpretation of the text. The choice of a solo voice alternating with the chorus was evidently suggested by Joyce's division of his paragraphs into a short opening question and a long answer—a formal-dramatic element of which Seiber makes use in the following manner: in the first three numbers, the solo tenor has, in addition to other passages of the text, the question: the chorus the reply; in No. IV this order is reversed, while in the *Epilogue* both question and answer are given to the chorus, the soloist singing only the very last sentence. The contrast is not only of individual voice against a choral mass, *i.e.* of different timbre and volume, but also of texture: the soloist mostly sings in an *arioso*-cum-recitative style with florid writing in the more lyrical passages while the choral parts either flow in long, undulating lines or move *en bloc* with harmonies often chosen for their suggestive effect. In the last movement there is also a *Sprechchor*.

For the purpose of achieving musical unity the composer allows the five movements to be dominated by a central motive whose characteristic feature is the alternation between a major and minor third:

Ex. 1



*hochqualifiziert*⁵—not just a seemingly improvisatory succession of the twelve chromatic notes, following no deliberate pattern, but characterized by a special order of sequence. The feature of Seiber's row is its symmetry. The twelve notes are divided into two groups of six each, the first ascending and the second descending; at the same time the second group represents the mirror of the first transposed a semitone up. In addition, the only intervals used are minor thirds and semitones in regular alternation, with a single whole-tone at the apex. The shape of this series may be described as "question and answer" of which feature the composer has made ingenious use in the melodic structure of the *allegro*.

In the *Epilogue*, Ex. 1 generates a twelve-note series of a less distinguished character which serves as the subject for an introductory orchestral fugue in eight parts:



Yet this does not complete the composer's recourse to atonal devices. In No. IV, the *Nocturne*, he introduces yet another tone-row which, unlike the two previous ones, is wholly independent of the germ motive, Ex. 1, and which partly originated from a work of Schönberg's. More will be said about this later but here we may make the general observations that in none of these three movements does Seiber apply the Schönbergian technique with a strict observance of its rules.⁶ Except for the *Nocturne*, his handling of it is considerably freer than in, say, Berg's *Lyric Suite* and violin Concerto. There are tonal chords and a tonal pull is felt, notably in the scherzo of No. III and the fugue of No. V. Broadly speaking, the five movements of the Cantata present an intentionally symmetrical, classical key-scheme: E-A-E-B-E. In other words, *Ulysses* is "on" the tonality of E which is defined by its dominant and subdominant keys, yet greatly expanded and complicated by chromaticism and harmonic shifts reminiscent of Bartók's method of expanding tonality.

So much for general features. Turning to the individual movements, our chief interest concentrates on the way in which the composer has responded to his text. To start with, what in No. I seems to have caught his imagination in the first place, were the image and the rich verbal sound of "*The Heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit*". After "setting the atmosphere" in the tenor's introduction, a prologue darkly-coloured, slow and brooding, the chorus opens in close thirds and branches out into swaying, long-drawn arabesques calling up the image of Joyce's "Heaventree".

⁵ See *Über Neue Musik* (Vienna, 1937).

⁶ This is also true of his *Fantasia Concertante* which is written wholly in the twelve-note style.

Ex. 4

Soprano: The hea-ven tree

Alto: The hea-ven tree

Tenor: The hea-ven tree

Bass: The hea-ven tree

p *poco a poco string. e cresc.* *molto espr.* Ah

molto espr. Ah

molto espr. Ah

molto espr. Ah

etc.

Though no mortal has yet heard the "music of the spheres" the continuous weaving and revolving of lines of Seiber's chorus suggests something of that mysterious effect.

Joyce's second paragraph presented a considerably more difficult proposition. This long meditation on "*Evolutions increasingly vaster*" consists of the enumeration of a multitude of astronomical phenomena. It was apparently the underlying idea of a constant yet varied motion of different stellar bodies that suggested a musical treatment in the form of a *passacaglia*—a masterly solution of the problem of finding a musical form which would both symbolize the intellectual contents of the text and hold the structure of the whole movement together. The ground-bass of the *passacaglia* may thus be taken to stand for the idea of the Universe while the variations upon it illustrate the diverse evolutions occurring within the infinite space. The theme with its triple-time and chromatic descent is clearly modelled on the old *passacaglia*.

Ex. 5

mf Tbn. & Tuba

poco a poco string. e cresc.

As with the tone-rows in the third and last movements, Seiber handles it in a completely free manner, now extending it, now shortening it and, in addition, using figure X (a variant derived from the central motive, Ex. 1) for development. Moreover, the theme also moves to the upper part so that "chaconne"

would perhaps be a more accurate description. While Ex. 5 is used in some variations more than once, each variation has a melodic and rhythmic pattern of its own, yet the basic $3/4$ metre is retained throughout, thus imparting to the *passacaglia* an overriding rhythmic unity. One of the most impressive variations is set to the words, "of our system plunging towards the constellation of Hercules" whose dramatic image the composer has transmuted into a vigorous fast-moving *fugato* on three subjects divided between chorus and orchestra:

Ex. 6

Of our sy - stem plun - ging, plun - ging etc.

Vins. etc.

Bass etc.

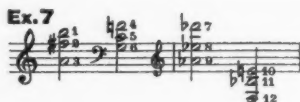
f (Passacaglia Theme)

and culminating in a powerful unison of the choral subject which is crowned in the following variation by a close four-part canon on the whole orchestra, representing the climax of the movement.

In the third paragraph, "*Obverse Meditations of Involutions increasingly less vast*", Bloom turns from the Universe to our planet, from the macrocosm to the microcosm, from the inorganic to "*organic existences*". To suggest Joyce's obverse picture, Seiber opens the movement with a mirror-like inversion of the orchestral introduction of the preceding movement reminiscent of similar "tricks" in the word settings of the mediaeval polyphonists. The main section of the movement is a fast scherzo-like *allegro* which, as already mentioned, is based on the tone-row, Ex. 2. As in the *passacaglia*, each sentence of the text is set to a variation of the basic row (also used in its *cancrizans* version in the recapitulation of the scherzo) and the whole is held together rhythmically by the pervading $6/8$ metre. The several divisions of the chorus and the almost continuous splitting of the lines into small fragments inevitably conjure up the image of the microscopic multitude of organisms of which Bloom speaks. A subtle touch here is the change, at the words, "*of the universe of human serum*" from the impersonal chorus to the solo voice. This section is to be taken as the contrasting trio of the scherzo. Equally suggestive is the setting of the last sentence, the alliterative "*nought nowhere was never reached*", which is spoken by the chorus *senza voce* while the orchestra dies away on increasingly shorter fragments of the tone-row.

In the fourth paragraph Joyce describes the nocturnal aspect of our planet which is mirrored in music of a strangely pale, wraith-like character. There is a cold, impersonal and at times eerie air about it—it is all atmosphere rather than *Stimmung*. The movement is by way of a homage to Schönberg. It is based on a tone-row whose first six notes have been taken from the sixth of Schönberg's piano Pieces, Op. 19. As in Schönberg, Seiber introduces them in their

chordal version to which he adds two more chords of his own to complete the series:



There are repetitions of individual notes, changes of their original sequence in the series and chordal versions of them with tonal implications. But unlike the other two movements employing the twelve-note technique, the *Nocturne* derives the *whole* material from Ex. 7 and consists of continuous variations of it.

The reason for Seiber's borrowing from Schönberg was the fact that the two chords struck him as a perfect embodiment of the idea of nocturnal stillness and pallor. It is precisely this impression which the piece creates from its very beginning: low-lying choral parts in block-harmonies with "hollow" fourths and fifths and broken and shadowy figures in the orchestra which are scored in such a way as to produce the effect of pale, etiolate colours. The *Nocturne* which owes something to the style of Bartók's "night music" is a masterly study in evanescent sounds and perhaps the most immediately impressive of the five movements.

The *Epilogue* refers back again to the opening movement and for a subtle reason. It will be seen that while in the opening paragraph Bloom and his young friend are subject to an illusion, "the heaventree", in the last paragraph they realize that "*it was a Utopia*", a negation, as it were, of all they had imagined they might see in the cosmos. Therefore, the *Epilogue* takes up where the *Prologue* ended: the concluding violin solo of No. I is, in No. V, spun out into the twelve-note fugal subject of Ex. 3. This eight-part fugue is the most extensive orchestral piece of the Cantata and seems to suggest the mental process of Bloom's "*having weighed the matter*" (does it also stand for Bloom's "*allowing a possible error*"?!). The rest of the movement is mainly choral, recapitulating some of the material of the first movement such as "the heaventree" music. But there is now a significant change. While in the first movement the music gradually rose from dark to bright colours, in the *Epilogue* this process is reversed; moreover, the texture becomes increasingly thinner, disintegrates into mere particles and sinks back to the low solitary E on which the Cantata began—an ending strangely moving in its transcendental suggestion of human frustration.

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Mahler's Impact on the Crisis of Tonality

BY

HANS TISCHLER

To mark the fortieth anniversary of the composer's death

AFTER an interruption of several years, Mahler's symphonies are once more heard in Central Europe where they have always been liked. Also in this country and in America performances of his major works are noticeably on the increase in recent years, bearing out the composer's confidence in such a course of events. Still, the more complicated symphonies, Nos. 5 to 10, remain largely unknown. It is chiefly in these later works, however, that Mahler created or propounded new musical idioms. And these idioms, indeed, influenced his and our contemporaries, for Mahler was not only a most dynamic personality but also one of the leaders of European music in his time.

Some chronology will be helpful to begin with. Mahler was born in 1860. A review of the names of significant composers contemporary with Mahler discloses that those only slightly older than he, for instance, d'Indy, Elgar, Puccini, Wolf and Albeniz, as well as a host of younger men such as Glazounov, Granados, Sibelius, Wolf-Ferrari, Pfitzner and Ibert remained intrinsically nineteenth-century Romanticists. Mahler was the oldest of the group of composers who have written significant pages in early twentieth-century music, namely Debussy (1862), Delius (1863), Strauss (1864), Roussel (1869), Scriabin (1872), R. Vaughan Williams (1872), Reger (1873), Schönberg (1874), Holst (1874), Ravel (1875), Falla (1876), Bartók (1882), Stravinsky (1882), and others.

Mahler's first period of mature composition started in 1884 with the *Songs of a Wayfarer* and ended with the fourth Symphony in 1900. During this period the master was chiefly concerned, it seems, with keeping his musical style outside the sphere of Wagnerian influence. The rich *palette* of secondary dominants and chromatic modulation is employed only in a few very "romantic" passages for the sake of contrast with an otherwise austere style. Mahler's harmonic idiom at this stage comprised five chief elements, namely:

- (1) traits of the nineteenth-century German folk song;
- (2) avoidance of the usual classical cadences;
- (3) mixtures and contrasts of tonic majors and minors;
- (4) displacement of chord tones by chromatic neighbour tones in passages of certain emotional qualities; and
- (5) dramatic key symbolism.

The folk-song influence had chiefly two harmonic effects, *viz.* (a) a strong emphasis on tonic and dominant in diatonic alternation and (b) the prominent employment of similarly worked-out pedal points, frequently of both tonic and

coined recently for this phenomenon, does not do justice to it and is rather misleading, since this trait is not the product of purely musical considerations. It is herewith proposed to call this procedure "dramatic key symbolism".* One Mahler symphony may, for instance, indicate a hopeful solution for the troubles of this life—the subject of all his works—while another may end in retreat or on the same note of drama on which it started. Consequently the keys in the cycle will proceed, for example, from C sharp minor to D major in the Fifth, from D major to D flat major in the Ninth, or from A minor back again to A minor as in the Sixth.

We find here a first fissure in the older concept of tonality. A direct extension of this attitude led Mahler to represent the height of insecurity and uncertain tragic struggle by passages of vague or multiple tonality or even by completely non-tonal or atonal stretches—one of the most typical style criteria of his second period.

This period started in 1900 with the cycle *Songs on a Child's Death* and includes the fifth to eighth symphonies, composed up to 1907. The last period, terminated during the composition of the tenth Symphony by death in 1911, saw the completion of *The Song of the Earth* and the Ninth. In this last period Mahler's style took another step forward, but its direction cannot be completely assessed from these few works. We shall therefore discuss Mahler's later style as it may be distilled from both his later periods.

This later style is technically an intensification of the earlier one, an intensification that led to significant developments in contemporary music. The strong liking for alternations of tonic and dominant (1a) led, by way of telescoping, to frequent combinations of both chords. Once the feeling of logic in polychordal constructions had thus been established, Mahler extended this concept to combinations of other chords. Consequently, while he never employed polytonality, many passages produce a similar impression. The following example may serve as an illustration:

Ex.2—VI 4, development (5 measures after 133), schematic:



* Cf. the author's article, "Key Symbolism versus Progressive Tonality", in *Musicology* II, 4; July, 1949, 383ff.

The pedal points (1b) now frequently acquired new contents. The sustained tone might now serve as the only tonally fixed point in an otherwise non-tonal passage, as in the following two examples:

Ex. 3—IX 2, near end of recapitulation (27 measures before 26):



Ex. 4—VII 1, modulation between first and second themes in recapitulation (1 measure before 57):



It is easy to see how, by omitting such pedal points, Mahler arrived at passages of uncertain tonal relationship. On the other hand, in the later style pedal points do not necessarily have tonal functions, but may be employed as a variety of polychordal effects, harking back to the methods of Liszt and others, for example:

Ex. 5—VII 1, near end of development (4 measures before 89):



As has been pointed out, the avoidance of cadence structures (2a) leads to an emphasis on contrapuntal content; in other words, the necessary fluctuation

of tension that governs the phrase and period results from dissonance-consonance relations rather than from tonal tensions. The concept of dissonant counterpoint is born thereby. A crass example will prove this point:

Ex. 6—IX 2, end of recapitulation (27):



Ex. 6 contains one further important factor that produces dissonance as well as veiled tonality, namely the setting out of a melodic strain in chords. An interesting instance, where the tones of a diminished-seventh chord—functionally the second dominant of D major—are successively harmonized with dominant-seventh or ninth chords, will clarify this procedure:

Ex. 7—VI 4, end of second introduction at beginning of development (4 measures before 124), schematic:



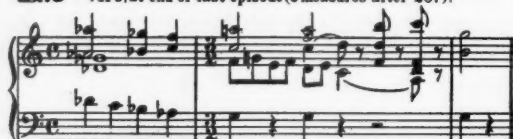
Occasionally two such chordally treated melodic lines meet in violent dissonances.

Another variety of non-functional, that is cadence-less tonality, emerges from the quasi-indiscriminate employment of all tones of a scale simultaneously in a contrapuntal texture. This idea of scalar tonality or pandiatonicism was realized as early as 1895 in Mahler's third Symphony, but it assumes ever greater importance in his later works, culminating in the first movement of the Ninth.

The cadence-less modulation (2*b*) was, in Mahler's later works, usually handled so that the sudden shift is chromatically camouflaged as in the two following examples:

Ex. 8—VI 2, coda (3 measures before 61):



Ex.9 - VII 5, at end of last episode (5 measures after 287):

On the whole, chromaticism (4) is far more in evidence after 1900 than before in Mahler's works. This is one symptom of the composer's growing expressionism which led him to an increasing employment of unresolved neighbour tones, now frequent in chords as well as in melodic lines, and of major-minor juxtapositions. In addition it found an outlet in chromatic alteration of tones especially in descending melodies. In the following C sharp minor passage the G and F express extreme depression:

Ex.10 - V1, near end (19):

Such altered lines, in turn, are often combined with unaltered ones, leading to harsh dissonances and further veiling of tonality, for example:

Ex.11 - VII 1, near beginning of development (26):

This passage may be interpreted as based either on the tonic or on the dominant of D major by substituting the attempted reconstruction for either line; but

the repetitions of the D make the former more probable. In the train of increasing expressionism completely non-tonal, chromatic passages emerge, in which several chromatic strains move in a staggered arrangement and lead to vehement clashes:

Ex.12 - X4 (leaf 9, 2nd system, measure 6):



The expressionistic tendency that led to all these intensifications resulted in further innovations *via* Mahler's quest for new melodic outlines. Turning away from the melodic use of the triad he found several possibilities confronting him. The construction of chords and melodies by piling up additional thirds onto the triad was more or less Debussy's property; similarly structures derived from the whole-tone scale. The minor triad with added sixth had become one of the outstanding Romantic combinations. On the other hand, Mahler was not yet ready to employ chords derived from minor seconds. He therefore turned to superimposed fourths in his Seventh and Eighth, explored the possibilities of the major triad with added sixth in *The Song of the Earth*, and finally those of the major triad with added sixth and ninth in the same work and in the Ninth, arriving therewith at a configuration of four fifths, for instance C-G-D-A-E.

Though first employed melodically, all these combinations were soon also used harmonically by Mahler. Of them, the major triads with sixths or sixths and ninths are akin to scalar tonality; while they retain clear tonal implications, they reduce the possibilities for functional progressions, because little tension can be set up between the chords of a key when four or five tones of the scale constitute the tonic harmony. Scalar tonality may also result from the use of fourth chords, but these chords tend to disrupt tonality further, since it is hard to judge the implied roots. Hindemith's method of grading chords clarifies this point: two fourths are equally strong root indicators. Since Mahler uses these chords in all possible inversions, the slightly stronger root feeling for the lower fourth is often obliterated. Here as in the cases of dissonant counterpoint, non-tonal passages, pandiatonicism, and polychordal texture, Mahler but reached a threshold; it was left to others to make use of these fourth chords

without reducing them frequently to triads or underpinning them tonally as Mahler did in the following example:

Ex 13—VII 1. end of Introduction (5 measures before 6)



This discussion proves that Mahler was instrumental in shaping several important twentieth-century concepts of harmony. It now becomes necessary to compare dates to determine to what degree he initiated them. Mahler was not the first to use non-tonal textures. Satie, for instance, wrote nearly atonal pieces as early as 1887. But these were experimental, neither serious nor influential, while Mahler's increasing bent toward such a technique influenced the standard bearer of non-tonal music in our time, Schönberg, who, under this direct impact, changed his Wagnerian style about 1906.

When Mahler wrote his first passages of dissonant counterpoint, Strauss was using it, too, but merely as a means of illustration. A more serious, purely musical use of this technique only followed Mahler's fifth and sixth symphonies in such works as Strauss' *Elektra*, Bartók's string quartets, Stravinsky's ballets and some early compositions by Hindemith. Similarly, scalar tonality or pandiatonicism has, though Mahler may not have been the first to arrive at it, had its greatest influence through him, especially on the Soviet Russian composers and Stravinsky.

Mahler introduced fourth chords as a consistent technique in 1904 in his seventh Symphony, which was first performed four years later at Prague with an enormous impact on the professionals in the audience, as a witness of this *première*, Karel Jirak, affirms. To be sure, Mahler as well as Satie and Scriabin had employed them tentatively for almost twenty years before. But it was only around 1910 that Scriabin became a consistent user of this technique, and Bartók, Stravinsky, and Hindemith took it up only thereafter.

Mahler's polychordal passages and chordal melodic lines, finally, were important in bringing about polytonality which matured in the hands of Stravinsky, Busoni and Bartók after the master's death. Again many composers wrote polychordal configurations contemporaneously with Mahler, but the concept of chordal lines in a polyphonic texture appears to have been his personal creation by which he endowed this technique with the needed musical

logic. Over all this we must not forget the dramatic key symbolism, which was a powerful factor in the process of loosening the bonds of functional tonality.

To sum up: Mahler's harmonic progress was but symptomatic of his period. But he had a firmer grasp of the harmonic problems that faced his generation and of their probable solutions than most of his contemporaries. With an impetuous vitality and a sure hand he advanced and disseminated new techniques until death took him out of the running. With his eminent position and personality he was one of the most outstanding and most influential instigators of the crisis in tonality which reached its climax in the quarter century after his death.

Sullivan, Gilbert, and the Victorians

BY

ARTHUR JACOBS

I

THE music of Purcell, Handel, Arne, Parry, Elgar, and Vaughan Williams will provide the opening programme of the Royal Festival Hall this month. As a selection of composers, this is safe and respectable. Within their period, these are the six names which "enlightened" musical taste to-day might agree are the most significant in British musical history. Few will be disquieted by the hundred-year gap which stretches between the death of Arne and the maturity of Parry. That period is supposed to be a dark one. British music, we are left to believe, got bogged in a Slough of Despond until a benevolent giant named Parry-and-Stanford pulled it out.

Dominated as we still are by the giant's pupils and followers, we can scarcely affect surprise at the widely current acceptance of this story. He would be bold who, as a counter-blow, acclaimed Balfe or Sterndale Bennett as a neglected great master. But where stands Sullivan? Though born as late as 1842, only six years before Parry, he was musically of an older generation. He had found his essential style by 1867, the year in which appeared his collaborations with the librettist F. C. Burnand, *Cox and Box* and *The Contrabandista*. He is not a figure of what is usually described as Britain's musical renaissance, as is easily observable from his non-operatic songs, nearly all of which conform closely to the type of the Victorian drawing-room ballad.

Cultivated musicians to-day show little enthusiasm for Sullivan; yet, without their aid, without propaganda or subsidies, his music lives. It lives, moreover, in the theatre, where taste changes so rapidly. It has survived the high-powered, commercialized challenge of successive waves of American popular music. When the copyright in Sullivan's music expired last November, tunes from the Savoy operas were evidently topical enough to be harnessed forthwith to satirical lyrics in West End revue, and to be used for "singing commercials" on the American radio. A composer whose music is so robust surely deserves serious reconsideration. One may question whether Sullivan as an individual has not been unduly depreciated because of the low estimate accorded to his period in general; and, further, whether this estimate should not be revised, and our conventional view of the so-called renaissance somewhat modified.

That Sullivan's main support should come from the generality of audiences, rather than from specialist musicians, is nothing new. The Gilbert and Sullivan operas were designed and presented for play-goers rather than opera-goers. They succeeded the old burlesques, in which rhymed dialogue was interlarded with songs set to tunes from well-known operas and operettas of the day: *Princess Ida* (1884) was in fact Gilbert's adaptation of his own *The*

Princess (1870), a burlesque founded on Tennyson's poem of that name. And since the appeal was to those who knew Gilbert also from the non-musical stage (he never ceased, throughout his career, to write "straight" plays) there was sense as well as euphony when Richard D'Oyly Carte made it "Gilbert and Sullivan" and not the other way round. Indeed, in reviews of the period, and in books written shortly afterwards, it is not uncommon to find a Gilbert and Sullivan work described as a "play": "Then, as the play proceeds", wrote François Cellier, D'Oyly Carte's resident musical director from 1878,

"we listen to the repeated chorus of laughter and applause interlarded with moments of dead silence, strangely broken by a *frou-frou* rustle, a wish, as the vast audience, greedy to devour every morsel of our author's humour, turns over the pages of the book of words".

Is it then Gilbert who has preserved Sullivan? Dr. Ernest Walker (in a footnote to Scholes' *The Listener's History of Music*) came near to this view, emphasizing that Sullivan's works with Gilbert keep the stage and his others do not. But this argument can be applied in reverse. The stage works which Gilbert wrote without Sullivan—whether non-musical, or in association with such composers as Osmond Carr and Edward Solomon—are dead also. Gilbert, indeed, was by modern standards a verbose, almost rhetorical writer of dialogue. Even the D'Oyly Carte company to-day shortens the interchange hanging on the "orphan-often" pun in *The Pirates of Penzance*; and not even the best jokes survive unimpaired when repeated nightly for fifty years. Gilbert's real service was to provide good genuinely-developing plots and a seemingly endless variety of rhyme-schemes and metre. These stimulated Sullivan. It may be fair to say, with Hesketh Pearson, that Gilbert dominated Sullivan in something like the husband-wife relationship; but the music is the fulfilment of the collaboration.

It was the Savoy operas that made Sullivan a rich man and a celebrity. ("The Savoy operas" is a conventional and convenient label, though *Trial by Jury* was originally produced at the Royalty Theatre, and *The Sorcerer*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Patience* at the Opéra Comique, London.) Yet his ambition was to be acclaimed for his "serious" work, now barely remembered. He was hurt when Dame Ethel Smyth, who was not one to prize a second-rate oratorio above a first-rate operetta, told him that his masterpiece was *The Mikado*. Fundamentally, Sullivan's own viewpoint differed only in degree from that of the critic who wrote, reviewing *The Sorcerer* in *The World*: "It was hoped . . . that he would soar with Mendelssohn, whereas he is, it seems, content to sink with Offenbach".

A scholar, and even more so a prospective performer, will not derive much exhilaration to-day from going through Sullivan's non-theatrical output. The overture *Di Ballo* is still occasionally given, but a new generation might find the *In Memoriam* overture sententious and the Symphony (1866) unremarkable if not unpleasing. With Sullivan's festival-type choral works, on secular and sacred subjects—from *Kenilworth* (1864) to *The Golden Legend* (1886)—a further difficulty arises. The very type of work has fallen into disfavour with

modern audiences, and even an interesting and creditable specimen of this *genre* could scarcely be resuscitated with success.

These choral works find Sullivan at his most and least adventurous. In *The Golden Legend* he made considerable use of leading-motives: there is, for instance, a theme representing not simply Lucifer, but specifically Lucifer in his disguise as a doctor. (Did this indicate Wagnerian influence, despite the lack of sympathy which Sullivan felt towards most of Wagner's work? Perhaps it is apter to point to the use of what the composer calls "the typical melody" in Gounod's *The Redemption*, by far the most successful work of its type and period.) In the same work of Sullivan's occur passages of this type:



harmonically more advanced than anything heard at the Savoy; but the listener is also subjected to such banality as is contained in "O Gladsome Light" in this *Cantata*, or such as more seriously mars *The Light of The World* (1873):

Ex.2 *cresc.*
Voice
that the Son of God might be glo - ri - fied there - by
Orchestra *cresc.*

Even at the Savoy Sullivan lapsed sometimes into mere routine: often when Gilbert's verse also lacked fire, as in "All is prepared" in *The Sorcerer* or "Come, Mighty Must" in *Princess Ida*. Usually the clever texts kept the composer alert. Emotionally, however, Gilbert did not ask Sullivan to plumb deep; and Sullivan, too good a craftsman to put a wrong musical interpretation on a *libretto*, nevertheless complained. His work, he declared,

"has hitherto been word-setting, I might almost say syllable-setting, for I have looked upon the words as being of such importance that I have been continually keeping down the music in order that not one should be lost".

If there were less contrivance and absurdity in the plots,

"there would then be a feeling of reality about it which would give a fresh interest in writing, and fresh vitality to our joint work".

That was in 1884, after *Princess Ida*. *The Yeomen of the Guard*, four years later, was a move in what the composer felt to be the right direction; its semi-serious import certainly drew from Sullivan some of his best music. But the public response disappointed him, and the line was not pursued—not, at any rate, in association with Gilbert.

Gilbert's reasons for resisting Sullivan's tendency towards "grander" opera seem to have been mainly practical: "Where, in God's name", he wrote, "is your Grand Opera soprano (who can act) to be found?" (And where, one might add, was the grand opera singer of those days who would submit to the teamwork and iron discipline imposed by Gilbert as stage director?) Now, after the event, it is clear that musically, also, Gilbert's attitude to working with Sullivan was correct. His *libretti* fettered Sullivan: but the fetters were those consistent with Sullivan's gifts. The fairies' wailing in *Iolanthe*, the menacing of the ghosts in *Ruddigore*, the rage of Katisha in *The Mikado*—such episodes, in which pathos has to be conveyed only within the context of comedy, went as far towards the expression of deep emotions as Sullivan was required to go at the Savoy. But when, in other works, Sullivan *does* aim at these deep emotions, he fails to convince to-day. For that task, in other words, he had recourse to what were then "stock responses" which are now no longer current. Whereas, in the lighter emotional ranges to which Gilbert limited him, Sullivan still has the power to affect and to delight.

But Sullivan is not a composer with merely a facility for appealing melody and satisfying orchestration. His gifts, no less than Gilbert's, were essentially theatrical. It is true that *Ivanhoe* (1891) his one serious opera, has not lasted. But it is not true that it failed: what failed was D'Oyly Carte's system of running it in consecutive performances, of which it achieved 160 before being withdrawn, instead of as part of a general repertory. If it were not that it calls for a stage setting of somewhat Meyerbeerian extravagance (with nine different scenes) we might even hope for a revival. The opera may be found wanting perhaps in musical depth—it is this, as we have remarked, that lessens the appeal of Sullivan's "serious" music to-day—but not in the cogency of its musico-dramatic structure.

Sullivan was early attracted to the theatre. In 1864, three years after completing his studies at Leipzig, he became organist at the Royal Italian Opera House (as Covent Garden was then called) and composed the ballet *L'Île Enchantée* for that theatre. His choral works themselves manifest a tendency towards a stage presentation. *On Shore and Sea* (1871) has sections alternating between sailors afloat and their women-folk at home; *The Golden Legend* even has stage directions—"They reach a height overlooking the sea, and encamp. Evening"; "... struggles at the door, but cannot open it". (Such works in those days provided a substitute for stage works, when the theatre was still in process of gaining complete respectability: compare *The May Queen*, Sterndale Bennett's Leeds Festival offering of 1858, with its similar stage directions—and also Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.)

On Shore and Sea contains the device that was to be entirely characteristic of the Savoy operas—the contrapuntal combination of tunes that have

previously been heard separately. It is a device that obviously lends itself to dramatic use, for the contrasting of character or the developing of situations. In *The Pirates of Penzance* the use of cross-rhythm enhances the device with masterly effect. The chorus of girls, seated on the beach, are determined to talk about the weather while the lovers declare their passion:

Ex.3

Mabel
Did ev - er mal - den wake from

Frederic
Did ev - er pi - rate loathed for -

Chorus of Girls
How bean - ti - ful - ly blue the sky, The glass is ri - sing

Orchestra
col Sea bass...
p

dream... of home - ly du - ty

sake... his hi deous mis - sion

ve - ry high Con - ti - nue fine I hope it may, And yet it rain'd

Sullivan was well acquainted with the standard operas of his day—when Bellini and Donizetti, Auber and Meyerbeer had not yet disappeared from the London stage. He was in fact engaged by the publisher Boosey to prepare and edit the vocal scores of several of these, including Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl* (of which Gilbert had written a burlesque, *The Merry Zingara; or, The Topsy Gypsy and the Pipsy-Wipsy*). From these operas Sullivan derived many set formulae—for instance his long and complex first-act finales, and his ending of the complete work (except in the case of *Utopia Limited*) by a *reprise* of some tune already heard. But Sullivan could develop and revitalize these procedures: the patter-song, for instance, might be thought to have been exhausted by Rossini, but Sullivan expanded it into a delightful trio in *Ruddigore*.

In some other dramatic devices Sullivan learned from Offenbach—notably in parody and quotation. Like Offenbach, Sullivan quoted on two levels. Any theatregoer would recognize, in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, the orchestral allusion to the *Marseillaise*; but in quoting Gluck's "*Che farò senza Euridice*"—through the mouth, too, of this utterly bourgeois Orpheus, who does not want

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Eurydice back at all—Offenbach was providing a relish for the musical gourmet. Similarly not everyone who spotted “Rule, Britannia” in *Utopia Limited* would respond to the quotation from Bach’s “Great G minor” organ fugue in the Mikado’s song.¹ The change in musical fashion, however, has affected our responsiveness to some of Sullivan’s allusions. The big ensemble of *Trial by Jury*, beginning “A nice dilemma”, was, as the *Times* reviewer recognized at its first performance, “a clever parody of one of the most renowned finales of modern Italian opera”—that is, “*Chi mi frena in tal’ momento?*” from *Lucia di Lammermoor*, of which Sullivan has reproduced the characteristic melodic and rhythmical flavour. Few will appreciate the allusion to-day.

To describe Sullivan as “our English Offenbach” became not uncommon. The phrase is said to have originated with Macfarren, and to have been intended disparagingly (though to-day one would take it as a compliment). It is appropriate to this extent: that Gilbert, Sullivan, and D’Oyly Carte were trying to create an English product which would satisfy the taste that had made Offenbach so much of a London success. The Englishmen, however, thought to raise the type of entertainment above what they considered the crudity of construction and the laxity of morals of certain French operettas. “Sullivan and I resolved”, recollected Gilbert in 1906,

“that our plots, however ridiculous, should be coherent; that our dialogue should be void of offence; that, on artistic principles, no man should play a woman’s part and no woman a man’s. Finally, we agreed that no lady of the company should be required to wear a dress that she could not wear with absolute propriety at a private fancy dress ball”.

When D’Oyly Carte did undertake an Offenbach production—he put on *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*, in 1897, when Sullivan’s powers were fading—it was in a bowdlerized version, with what *The Daily Telegraph* called “an air of desperate respectability”.

Our English Offenbach, then? In respect of function, perhaps so. But Bernard Shaw acutely found *Trial by Jury* (and the reaction surely applied also to its successors) “most unexpectedly churchy after Offenbach”. The epithet “churchy” does not merely recognize the fact that a phrase from one of Sullivan’s five dozen hymn-tunes (“Of Thy love some gracious token”) closely resembles a phrase from *Patience*. It indicates also that Sullivan, even in his light operas, inherited the English choral tradition—an inheritance which is as clearly seen in his unaccompanied or partly unaccompanied *ensembles* (like the so-called madrigal in *The Mikado* and the no less attractive one in *Ruddigore*) as in his choruses. Further, Sullivan’s very melodies and harmonizations often give an impression of solidity and even solemnity when contrasted with their cheekier French relations. Characteristic of French operetta, even to the

¹ The quotation is not to be found in the published vocal score. The vocal scores of the Savoy operas, indeed, represent obsolete standards of editing and piano-playing. The fault is the more serious because, apparently by arrangement between Sullivan’s executors and the D’Oyly Carte company, the full scores of the works are not published or otherwise available in general. A German firm’s edition of *The Mikado*, however, exists in full score in the British Museum; and in the Museum’s manuscript department is Sullivan’s holograph score of *The Yeomen of the Guard*, bequeathed by the composer to the Royal College of Music.

point of being a kind of trademark, is the jerky rhythm and foursquare phrasing seen in the following examples:

Ex. 4

a) Di-gue di-gue di - gue Di-gue di-gue don

b) À la cour Cha-que jour Quel-le joi - e

c) Le grand sin-ge d'A-mé-ri-que Qui ré-gnait à Plom-bi-no

d) Mor-tés, sor-tez de vos tom-beaux Pour re-viv-re, pour re-viv-re!

Sullivan liked something less brazen: many of his most popular tunes (for instance, "Three Little Maids from School", with its shifting of the accent at the fourth line of the stanza) are worth examining for what they show of Sullivan's rhythmic subtlety. No wonder that he did so well with "I have a song to sing, O" (from *The Yeomen of the Guard*), in which the length of the stanza increases progressively, or with the similarly cumulative song in *The Rose of Persia* (1899, with a libretto of near-Gilbertian skill by Basil Hood). Yet he could succeed also with such an apparently obvious rhythmical scheme as in the *Iolanthe* trio, "If you go in".

This article is not an attempt to elevate Sullivan to the rank of a "great composer": for greatness, whatever else it may or may not mean, surely includes the gift for expressing, in terms beyond the artist's own period, the profounder emotions—and this, as has been remarked, is where Sullivan failed. But I do suggest that the popular estimate of him is roughly correct: he was a real master of music in the theatre. His style is a real style, not a hotchpotch or a set of *clichés*; it has a freshness and invention that generally outweigh a certain over-fondness for such dangerous devices as the tonic pedal. And this style was harnessed to a rare awareness of theatrical effect. The result made him equally adept at pointing the comedy of an individual word:

Ex. 5

DUCHESS DUKE

She of beau-ty was a mod-el When a ti-ny tid-dle tod-dle

or at handling, without any break for spoken dialogue, such a complete and complex scene as is contained in the finale to act I of *The Mikado*.

Sullivan's achievement calls for special consideration in view of the social relationships of music in our own day. The Savoy Operas provided everyone with tunes to whistle: they were the *Oklahoma!* of their period. Yet they were written by a composer who moved and was respected in the "serious" musical world. The light musical theatre provided a bridge between "common man's

music" and "musicians' music". Are we not poorer without that bridge to-day? The question raises a number of general issues, to which we must now turn.

II

Sullivan indeed provided for the public the musical equivalent of bread-and-butter as well as of banquets. Yet this meant no condescension or deliberate writing-down on his part—any more than when Elgar wrote *Chanson de Matin* and the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches. *The Lost Chord*, for instance, Sullivan intended with entire seriousness; one of its most favoured interpreters was the American, Mrs. Ronalds, the dearest friend (and, it is sometimes presumed, the mistress) of Sullivan. The composer was hurt when this song began to undergo, even in his own time, the ridicule that has since given us Jimmy Durante's superb "I'm the guy that found the *Lost Chord*".² Nor did Sullivan adopt one style for such works—ballads, hymns, and the like—and another for music designed for more formal occasions. The *In Memoriam* overture, the opening theme of which is a fit companion-piece for "Onward, Christian Soldiers", shows this clearly enough.

Sullivan was in this a microcosm of his age. An uninterrupted musical *continuum*, so to speak, stretched then between the music-hall song and the Festival cantata. A symphony was reckoned to be more subtle and more highly organized than a drawing-room song, but it was not necessary to equip oneself with a new pair of ears before proceeding from one to another. For Elgar, also, this *continuum* existed. Thus the music of Sullivan and Elgar, being rooted in a musical idiom appreciated even by the non-musical, has a real contact with the people. The interest of other composers in "folksong", whatever it may have done to help those composers personally, is almost comically irrelevant to the problem of establishing a style which the normal Englishman will recognize as being of his own country and time. Sullivan is what an Englishman sings naturally, while folksong is what the professors teach him.

To-day the *continuum* has vanished. British musicians pride themselves on being heirs to a "renaissance", but it would seem that technical advances have been made at the cost of social disintegration. The former unity of national musical culture is no more. To-day "popular" and "serious" music go their separate ways without apparent interaction. "Jazz" (I use the term loosely) provides to-day's main successor to the ballads, salon piano pieces, and dances (often drawn from operas and operettas) of the Victorian age. But the usual attitude of the cultivated musician towards this, his country's musical bread-and-butter, is apathy: "The experts say", writes Eric Blom in *Music in England*, "that there is no English jazz worth talking about. The musician neither knows nor cares". It is typical of our day that *The Beggar's Opera*, which could be, and has been, as much everyman's entertainment as "Take It From

² Act II, Scene 1 of W. S. Gilbert's *The Fairy's Dilemma*, an extravaganza which ridicules a silly clergyman, opens with the stage direction: "Interior of the vicarage of St. Parabola. The Rev. Aloysius Parfitt discovered playing *The Lost Chord* on harmonium". Sullivan would not have appreciated this. But by the date of this production (1904) Sullivan was dead.

Here", has been turned by Benjamin Britten into a pretentious piece of agonized highbrowism. It is not surprising that the British light musical stage, abandoned by the recognized British composers, is now ruled over by clever Americans such as Richard Rodgers (composer of *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, and *South Pacific*). These American works have their links with contemporary serious American music,³ but not with British.

The consequence may be seen in the public apathy towards contemporary "serious" British music to-day. Audiences are keen enough on the established composers, from Bach to (significantly) Elgar; but, to quote from the Arts Enquiry's *Music* report, "an unfamiliar work . . . particularly one by a contemporary British composer has an unparalleled power of emptying a concert-hall". Or, as a leading British conductor recently put it: a programme of four Beethoven items and nothing else attracts a larger gathering than the same four items plus a modern British work—despite the public's liking (according to this conductor) for long programmes.

This is in the strongest contrast to the situation in Sullivan's England. It was then new works, new composers, new performers which formed the attraction in a concert (a fact which such visitors as Mendelssohn, Berlioz, and Rubinstein were not slow to turn to their advantage). A mere glance at the programmes of the Royal Philharmonic Society—which body now is scarcely more generous to modern music than any commercial promoter—will illuminate the point. A century ago concertgoers had that healthy appetite for being up to date which now characterizes patrons of the cinema and theatre.

Our present-day concertgoers are admittedly unadventurous, but theirs is not the whole responsibility. Nor is any good likely to come of chastising composers until they "simplify" their serious works. What is at fault is the general musical health of the community. The music which late-Victorians heard at the Savoy pointed the way to the music then receiving first performances at the Crystal Palace concerts. To-day's serious music demands a special kind of mental cultivation on its own—because the light stage, and light music in general, have abandoned their classic rôle. They no longer form the foothills from which the Parnassus of contemporary serious music is readily approached.

Our need is for composers who will re-establish light music in its proper status. These composers need not be writers of symphonies; but the two groups of composers must share a common set of musical and even social ideas, so that they can admire one another—as Brahms and the younger Johann Strauss did—and fertilize one another's music. It will be a bright day when a student at one of our musical academies, having carried off a prize or two, can arouse his principal's enthusiasm by declaring that he is going to write dance tunes.

We should do well to recapture the unity of national musical culture which Sullivan's day enjoyed. Because of that unity, the Victorian age in music

³ There is irony in the fact that the American who makes the most successful "symphonic arrangements" of tunes from such shows is Robert Russell Bennett, who went through the characteristic American process of studying with Nadia Boulanger.

deserves our study. It is not, even in composition, negligible. It had Sullivan, who in the fickle world of the theatre produced something stylish enough to win lasting affection; and its culmination was, in a real sense, Elgar—despite the fact that two later sovereigns shared with Victoria the most creative period of Elgar's life. For Elgar is not to be coupled with Parry, Stanford, and the so-called "renaissance". Significant, here, are these composers' solo songs—Parry and Stanford, men of university background and "intellectual" society, pioneered an almost new type of English art-song, but Elgar's songs, like Sullivan's, fall mainly within the type of the drawing-room ballad. A frankly popular element is to be found in both Sullivan's and Elgar's music: neither had any interest in folksong as a composer's tool or inspiration, but both fused something of essential Englishry with certain ideas drawn from continental music of their respective periods. There is biographical resemblance too: Sullivan and Elgar were both working musicians, both were averse to teaching, both developed a taste for "high life"—which their exertions, not their upbringing, secured them the right to enjoy. Not unnaturally the Prince of Wales, a close friend of Sullivan, became Elgar's patron as Edward VII. That Sullivan lives in the theatre, with which Elgar was little concerned, and that Elgar is so markedly the greater composer, does not obscure the musical kinship of the two.

But there have been two impediments to the proper study of Victorian music. The first is the concept of a "renaissance". For if that term describes the Parry-Stanford era, then the preceding period must be a kind of Dark Ages—"the darkest hour before dawn" (Blom)—a description that hardly attracts investigators. But by now we should have attained a perspective which shows that "renaissance" is too cataclysmic a term. After all, the music of the Parry-Stanford era no longer seems so full of life; indeed, apart from such pious resurrections as will open the Royal Festival Hall, Parry himself is hardly known except for his splendid misinterpretation of Blake, now the hymn of the embattled Women's Institutes. And even those musical activities other than composition—education, research, and so forth—which are said to mark the "renaissance" are in fact not so new as is often assumed.⁴

But it is not merely the concept of a renaissance that has inhibited the proper study of the Victorian age. A further impediment lies in the general characteristic of British scholarship. Our musical academies, and the music departments of our universities, emphasize musical rather than musicological values. Their graduates, therefore, if they have a historical bent, are most likely to turn to the further excavation of known treasure-spots—as witness

⁴ If such activities make a renaissance, then one might equally well claim a renaissance in the decade 1838–48. Consider some of that decade's phenomena—Chappell's *Collection of National English Airs*; Broadwood's pioneer collection of Sussex and Surrey folksong; analytical programmes, first in Edinburgh and then in London; the Musical Antiquarian Society, which published nineteen *folio* volumes of old music, including *Parthenia*; the educational work of Mainzer, Hullah, and Curwen; the birth of *The Musical Times* and of Novello's cheap editions of Handel; the Chair of Music at Dublin, and the establishment of the Cambridge University Musical Society. If the actual compositions of this period enjoy no fame to-day, it is still worth remembering that *The Bohemian Girl* (1843) conquered the entire operatic world, as no British work did again until the coming of Benjamin Britten.

the concentration of interest at the moment on the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In the study of the Victorian period, however, the primary interest lies in the social relationships of music—in how music fitted into a society whose achievements in politics and literature are recognized as prodigious. For such study the drawing-room ballad and the music of the Christy minstrels is of no less importance than a *Te Deum*.

The general historians, products of the history faculties of our universities, are not competent to undertake this type of study. Because of their training, and because of the accessibility of the material, they can approach the literature (and to a lesser extent the painting) of their periods with an open mind and a fair degree of understanding; but they cannot so approach music. Hence it happens that historians of nineteenth-century Britain have either avoided mention of music (a fault that seriously mars G. M. Young's *Portrait of an Age*) or have been content to repeat conventional judgments—often incompletely and perfunctorily, as in E. L. Woodward's volume (1815-70) in the *Oxford History of England*. At the other extreme is such a book as Ernest Walker's *A History of Music in England*, in which the social background is sadly neglected, and musical compositions are marked off as Good Things and Bad Things, after the style of *1066 and All That*.

Investigation is needed, not only to complement the detailed study that has been made of other aspects of the period's history, but also to assist our thinking on the social rôle of music to-day. We should do well if, without sacrificing the technical advances made and the higher international status gained by British music, we could once more integrate out national musical culture—and avoid seeming, as at present, to produce allegedly "better and better" music for fewer and fewer (as a proportion of the total of music-lovers) to hear. The key to the matter, I have suggested, is light music, which must once more become the concern of serious and contemporary-minded composers. Sullivan's achievement was to make the light musical stage a meeting-ground between Everyman and the specialist musician. He may be claimed, therefore, not as a great composer but as an important composer; and British music to-day is the poorer for lack of his equivalent.

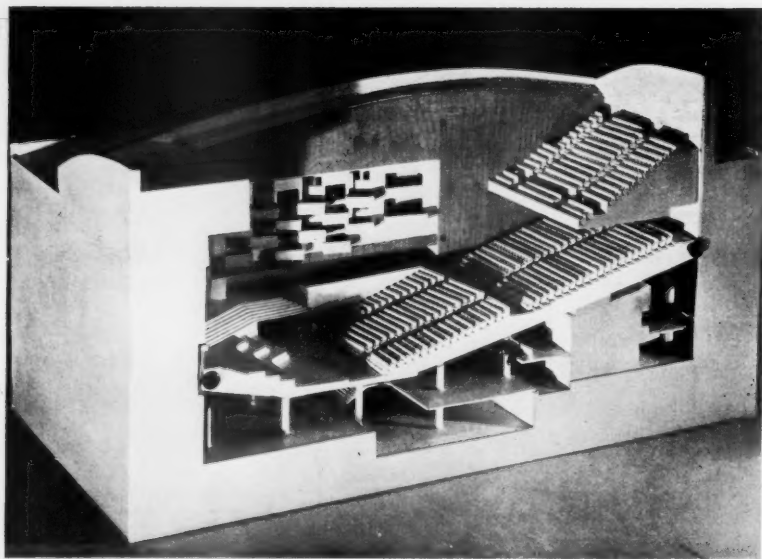
[The Decca Company have recently issued virtually complete recordings of several of the Savoy operettas, made by the D'Oyly Carte company and available for 33½ or 78 r.p.m. (Ed.).]

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The Royal Festival Hall

BY

GEOFFREY SHARP

By the time these words appear in print, the Royal Festival Hall will be complete—though not in all respects finished—and concert-goers will have begun to form their own impressions. These of mine are based on an exhaustive and exhausting series of tests carried out in the “unfinished” auditorium on 14th March.

There is no doubt at all that the front of the grand tier is the place in which to sit. Here the proportions of orchestral sound are well maintained (always supposing they are efficiently set forth, which in this instance they often were not), clarity, brilliance and carrying-power all seemed exemplary: and one could imagine and visualize, if only dimly, the real sound of a first-class orchestra—something London has not heard in its full splendour since Queen’s Hall was destroyed ten years ago.

In the front stalls one receives a larger impression, but the balance of parts, the “proportions” of the preceding paragraph, left a good deal to be desired. This may have been due in some measure to the fact that the orchestra had not been rehearsed, while grouping all the double-basses in a tight cluster brought about a directional effect which was both unmusical and unpleasant. The back stalls, under the grand tier, are to be avoided, at least on the showing of this particular test; here it seemed that a thick blanket had been suspended between orchestra and audience, and the resultant sound had no more “stage-presence” than has the seedy cacchination of an inferior gramophone. In no hall of my acquaintance has it ever proved wise to sit directly beneath a grand tier, dress circle or balcony, and in this respect it seems that the Royal Festival Hall is no better than many of its less ambitious predecessors.

As the reader is probably aware, provisions have been made in the building of this hall for “tuning” operations to be carried out within fairly wide limits and further changes may be made before the opening date. It should also be recorded that the “experimental” audience was subjected to several salvos of gunfire, some of it from a toy pistol of very minor calibre but also including a wicked piece of hand-ordnance which left our ears ringing and formed a most inauspicious prelude to any immediate careful, concentrated and critical listening.

On the whole, however, it seems clear that the best seats in the new hall will be very good indeed, though we cannot yet tell how many of these there will be.

* * * * *

Since the above was written certain modifications have been made to the auditorium, with a view to improving the “room-tone” with a minimum of consequent reduction in definition. As a result of further tests on 15th April, it is evident that the overall result has been improved so far as the front stalls and grand tier are concerned.

Music for Ballet

BY

A. V. COTON

It would be a big generalization—but one with a large degree of truth in it—to say that all folk music throughout history has been dance music; Dance is a matrix art and out of it many others have grown—not least, the Drama. Our records of Dance art are few and generally disconnected, and we have little exact knowledge of dance forms further away than, say, 1100–1150. The kind of basic folk-dance common in most of Europe in mediaeval times was that which became defined as the French *basse danse*—to us it would appear a monotonous and heavily repetitive pattern of “simple” and “double” steps going forward and backwards, sideways and sideways, accompanied by music vocal or instrumental, or sometimes both, which had strong rhythmic affinities with the popular verse-forms of the time. The growth of the elegant dances which comprised the highest development of the French Court Ballet down to 1789 was from the sturdy roots of the folk-dancing which occurred in fields, on threshing-floors and in church porches; social dancing—which was both communal and spectacular—gradually led to spectacular theatrical dancing carried out exclusively by trained professionals. Because of the need for patronage for both composers and dancing masters, these functionaries were attached to Courts or aristocratic residences and their functions were closely linked together for centuries; so long as the system of patronage remained as part of the feudal atmosphere surrounding absolute rulers, Court composers wrote dance music as a regular assignment. The very shape of the instrumental suite which allowed for the experimenting that led to the fullest exploitation of sonata-, and later symphonic, form, was based on the order of dances required for every formal ball, private show of theatricals and State occasion. At some point in the history of spectacular dance the composer began to be accepted by the dancing-master as an equal partner; not that we may assume the existence of a superior-against-inferior relationship before then—but the composer was bound in chains of “rhythmic necessity” for even longer than the choreographer. (We have to realize that although the art of Ballet shows a fairly continuous growth since the days of Provençal civilization, the elaborate system of training and the extensive vocabulary in use to-day are developments of the past century and a half. The catalogue of steps in use for Court dancing up to the middle of the eighteenth century was very small, probably not exceeding a dozen; but it was from this social-dance basis that professional Ballet was developed.)

Lully and Rameau had enormous importance in the guidance of the Court Ballet in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—but their musical inventions for dancing were circumscribed by the range of steps forming the limited (by comparison with developments since 1810) catalogue of dances. *Pavane*, *galliard*, *allemande*, *coranto*, *volta* and *bransles* had all been known since Renaissance days; the popularity, by the early eighteenth century, of such other forms as *sarabande*, *gigue*, *chaconne*, *minuet*, *gavotte*, *rigaudon*, etc., should not deceive us into crediting French *maîtres-de-ballets* with practically unlimited inventiveness—for these “new” dances were stylizations and adaptations from European peasant dances or dances seen and studied by travellers to the Spanish colonies.

When Ballet began to assume the professional form we know to-day, it was based largely on the developments which followed quickly on such events as the dramatic-ballet experiments of Vignano in Milan: Carlo Blasis’ systematization of a coherent training method: the introduction of a *planned method* (no-one knows when, or whence it came) of training the female dancer to use the *pointe*: the tremendous social impact early in the nineteenth century of the waltz; and the infiltration of the ideas of the Romantic Revival into the Dance Theatre. In fact, by the time that it became legitimate and fashionable to write “programme music” for the concert hall, Ballet demanded “programme

music" too; and whether the choreographer and the dancer were aware of it or no, the composer's contribution could begin to be as important artistically as was the quality of choreographic invention and the technical expertise of the dancer. In the oldest surviving nineteenth-century ballet, *Giselle*, we find one of the best examples of the planned ballet—one in which theme, choreography, music and *décor* have all been carefully tailored together. The history of Ballet in nearly all European theatres after 1858 (the date of the final honest-to-goodness Romantic ballets) right down to 1909 is a story of an art repeating formulas which have become outmoded: the small-scale exceptions are the attempts of a few choreographers to invent fresh subject-matter and the incidence of one or two composers who were able to write music better than the merely trivial stuff which was the commonplace of the Dance Theatre.

The fresh life which the art of Ballet has acquired in this century grew out of the great reformist movement initiated by Diaghilev in Russia (but carried out in Western Europe) and its artistic strength rested upon fresh valuations of the uses of music, *décor* and choreography. In a history which can be studied over seven centuries, Theatre Dance seems to have undergone changes only when strong pressures of reform have been applied from within, and these several reformist movements have each injected fresh life into current artistic practice. The four major reforms—and it must be emphasized that they were *reformist* and never revolutionary in character—occurred in, approximately, 1420, 1661, 1820 and 1904. The first date suggests clear demarcation between dance practice in the Mediterranean and the Gothic worlds, the Latin developments after this time leading towards a concentration on the problems of the solo dancer and on studies of step-composition and floor-pattern: a consequence of the contemporary Italian pre-occupation with mathematics and geometry. (The Gothic North continued developments centred on patterns for couples dancing in unison.) The year 1661 marks the founding of the French Academy—at first simply "an idea on paper" and later an actual dance school with thirteen teachers and twenty-two pupils plus resident choreographer, stage manager, designer and costumier; this was the only possible foundation on which a thoroughly professional system could be erected (there can be no professional dance until professional teachers have been established—and they must begin by fixing conventions of training method, dance shapes and expressive style). 1820 is, roughly, the year in which the formula of the Romantic Ballet takes shape—a strong dance drama involving a supernatural protagonist (usually female) in a fantasy of love, death, remorse, revenge and retribution. This *genre* led to the first wide popularization of Ballet and, expressively, was based on a larger choreographic range than had been common hitherto; its splendid innovation was the presentation of the female dancing on the *pointe*, a technical extension that gave her a new vocabulary of movements, while the formula gave her larger opportunities for expressive mime.

Fokine, the first choreographer to work for Diaghilev and creator of all the new ballets shown in Western Europe at the first impact of Diaghilev's *Ballet Russe*, stated in a manifesto in 1904 his theories on Ballet. He insisted on the proper co-ordination of music, dance style and *décor* in the pattern of choreography for the new Ballet; ideally, his hypothesis demanded an act of tripartite creation, *i.e.* new music, new inventions of movement, new *décor*, all to be welded together. Whether or no these new principles were always put into effect, this manifesto establishes the historic point at which the composer comes to full stature as a contributor to the art of Ballet; for certain ballets the method of triple co-operation was put into effect and the first three London seasons (1911, 1912, 1913) included nine works so created, including two such lasting master-works as *Petrouchka* and *Firebird*. While the Diaghilev Ballet dominated dance developments in our Theatre from 1909 to 1929, its five choreographers created more than half their total output to specially composed music—thirty-six out of fifty-nine ballets shown in London.

The minor renaissance beginning in the 1930's after Diaghilev's death has flowered in every country of the Western world in which Ballet was a legitimate part of the Theatre culture; during this period English Ballet, which had lacked a continuous historical

development, re-emerged as a vital kind of dance-art and an unique English form of theatrical expression. America witnessed the rise of its own first truly big-scale Ballet, based on foundations laid mainly by Russian teachers and choreographers. The nearly-sterile system of Paris was also revitalized by the various teachers, dancers, librettists and choreographers who had at some time been attached to Diaghilev. How far has the composer's artistic position been consolidated in this period?

An approximate reckoning of the output from all the groups of some standing, in all Europe and the Americas, since twentieth-century Ballet began, suggests the creation of about thirteen hundred works of Ballet (excluding all Modern Dance forms) and for these it is impossible to count more than three hundred original scores. In England we have made a little over three hundred ballets in this time and fewer than seventy used commissioned music. This seems a very significant factor in the present-day condition of this art, for the whole world of Ballet plus the ballet-going public has for a long time accepted the premise that Ballet in the middle of the twentieth century is a vitally important art because, in the main, it is being created and developed along the lines suggested by Fokine's reformation movement. Even Fokine did not always commission new music, but where extant music was used, it was carefully chosen as regards its atmospheric content, stylistic affinity with the subject, and rhythmic suitability for the dance composition. To-day in all but a minority of instances the music used for a ballet is the least satisfactory ingredient of the work. There must be several reasons for the failure of Fokine's "trinity principle" to become established as the norm of ballet creation; no one of them is likely to be the fundamental one. The shortcomings in the all-over quality of most contemporary ballets are more frequently musical than decorative or choreographic, which suggests that, in general, the composer is not looked upon as an indispensable partner in the creative process. Here are some of the obvious conclusions based on a study of ballets given in London recently. Many composers have never acquired the particular sensitivity about dancing that is necessary—and this may be due to lack of opportunity to study the problems of Theatre Dance; several have had one or two successes, and have made a dismal failure with a next attempt and so have ceased to be interested. Choreographers often seem to be lacking in musical sense and frequently have a minimum of technical knowledge about tone, key, rhythm, harmony (but no school exists wherein choreographers can be taught their kind of craft; it has been disputed that the choreographic craft *can* be taught, but my view is that budding choreographers could be successfully taught what is *not* admissible in ballet composition. Certainly they should have a skeleton education in music technique and be able to read a score with some awareness of its duration, rhythmic variability and general harmonic texture). The economic factor must be counted in, considering the very great cost of mounting new ballets: managers and directors—unless moved by very high artistic principles—will not force young choreographers to use specially created music: a living composer wants fees while the ex-copyright music of a hundred dead men can be had for the cost of the printed score. Public appreciation is for the more obvious effects of Ballet, which is primarily a visual art, and only close attention over many hundreds of visits can induce that degree of catholic taste which comprehends nuances of dance-style, choreographic pattern, decorative finesses, costume suitability, musical quality, level of orchestral playing, etc. We can fairly ask the question: Has the art of Ballet in fact reached the point of development at which it ought to be made consistently according to Fokine's "trinity principle"? And the answer seems to be, No. It can be argued, of course, that very soon after making his first impact on the West, Diaghilev allowed the composer to be superseded by the designer; a good deal of the vogue effect of the new ballets of the 1920's grew out of their startling decorative expressiveness—but at least the works were always supported by high quality dance-style, for most of the leading dancers were products of the Russian academies, whether under Czarist or Soviet control. And as the prime movers of the post-1930 renaissance were in all cases ex-dancers or ex-choreographers of the Diaghilev group, the necessity to rehabilitate the composer did not probably seem a matter of strong artistic importance.

In the practice of an art nominally consisting of an unison of work in three separate art-forms, it has happened that emphasis could be laid in turn on any one of the three, and as the whole range of propaganda during the period of Ballet's widest popularity has not been concerned with guiding creators, executants, impresarios and audiences towards an appreciation of the equal importance of music with dance and *décor*, the changes of fashion have emphasized choreographic and decorative trends at the expense of musical trends—if any! But perhaps the largest factor working against recognition of the importance of new music for Theatre Dance is the basic audience attitude. If an art is healthy it is reflecting and subtly commenting upon a wide range of the joys, hopes, fears and satisfactions which form the working philosophy of the generality of its regular audience. If this process of reflection and useful commentary is not occurring then the art is going through an unhealthy phase; whatever its degree of popularity it is serving the needs of only a small section of society—in the present case, probably only its creators and a minute group of *dilettante* supporters of the art. This may well explain the apathy about the need for new music created for to-day's Ballet, and that apathy is emphasized by the hard fact that the general audience does not consist of either musicians or dancers. If we briefly look over the history of Dance we can note that it gradually changed from a social art practiced by amateurs into a spectacular art only realizable by trained professionals. When dancing meant the peasants' and artisans' *bransles* and *basse-danses*, everybody danced; and the same folk-dances, suitably "cleaned up", formed the basis of polite indoor dancing for centuries. At a Court ball you danced all together in unison patterns, then each couple in turn performed a figure of dancing which was closely watched by all others present. Even when professional Ballet was being shaped in French theatres in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, social dancing at balls, routs and assemblies demanded a high degree of dancing, as well as musical knowledge. The "watershed" becomes apparent some time early in the nineteenth century, by which time to *watch* dancing was becoming more important than to perform. The consolidation of rigid social codes on many levels of polite European society during the nineteenth century helped the vogue for very polite forms of social dancing, all of which were in more and more marked contrast with Theatre Dance—but the ballroom dancing of that era was dominated by the waltz, the form which brought back the mediaeval concept of a social dance as something performed by couples; and for the first time in history permitted the woman to dance in the man's arms and facing him. The marked difference between this concept of dancing, and what went on on the stage, created a deeper separation than ever before between recreative and spectacular dancing. This is but part of the process set up by the Industrial Revolution, which killed all our folk arts and which to-day leaves us with a culture in which most artistic creation can only be carried out by full-time professionals. . . . It may well be that the next reform from within Ballet which can give it fresh vigour might be a simplifying of the formula of ballet-making—a concentration on dramatic or fantasy themes (avoiding the contemporary tendency to mix the two kinds)—a seeking for a simpler basic movement style *instantly* appreciable by an untrained audience—a resurrecting of dance forms not used in Ballet for over a century—an attempt to create a new, simpler formula for choreography *tied absolutely* to created music and dispensing with painted *décor* and fantasy costume. There are limitless possibilities: but only if an audience can be brought into the Theatre which has a fuller range of both dancing and musical knowledge than at present exists—a not unlikely contingency if new musical developments encourage the rehabilitation of amateur music-making as a desirable and rewarding form of recreational activity—as it was over large sections of society almost right through to the end of the nineteenth century. Ballroom dancing to-day is in a healthy state, it enjoys, amongst a quite different public, as wide a popularity as does Theatre dancing, and it has widened its technical province since the introduction of Latin-American rhythms and Negroid-cultural rhythms—however much they may have been debased or over-simplified—beginning with the tango craze of Edwardian days.

The idea behind Fokine's "trinity principle" has apparently shown itself consistently

unworkable under present-day conditions, so we may legitimately conclude that that reformist development has had its run and is no longer a real motive force in artistic creation. We are probably on the verge of another reformist shift of balance which may rise out of a simplification of the standard dance vocabulary. The most powerful development might be a realization that, for instance, the possibilities of the use of *pointe* technique have been thoroughly exploited. It perhaps sounds little less than blasphemous even to suggest the rise of a simplified choreographic technique which discards the use of the *pointe* . . . but there were plenty of connoisseurs of singing throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who might have thought it equally blasphemous to suggest the abolition of the "male soprano". Yet the male soprano, no less than the nineteenth and twentieth century female ballet dancer, got special effects artistically only through the unnatural adaptation of normal physiological practice.

Progress in Los Angeles, Music Capital of the West

BY

EVERETT HELM

NEW YORK has long been considered the metropolis of music in the United States; so it has been, and so it still remains. But in recent years musical activity in Los Angeles (I am speaking of *serious* musical activity, not that of the Hollywood studios) has increased and the quality thereof has risen to such an extent that this sprawling Western city now runs the compact island of Manhattan a close second and in one field, chamber music, bids fair to surpass it.

Hollywood (to which the epithets "barbaric", "moronic" and "cultureless" have been variously applied, sometimes not without certain cause) is at least partially responsible for much of the activity about to be described. For the studios, to which music is on the whole a mere ingredient in the movie industry, but which occasionally allow it to be an art as well, have engaged musicians of extremely high calibre to produce their film music. The performing standard of the studio orchestras is incredibly high, even if the artistic level of the music produced often leaves something to be desired. But that is another story. The point is that the studio musicians, nearly all of whom are greater or lesser *virtuosi*, yearn for the chance to hear and to make serious music after the day's grind in the studios; and they do, in fact, make it, both for their own pleasure and for the public.

And the public responds! Here in California everything is relatively new; there are few historical buildings (except for the old Spanish mission churches), few reminders of the past. The present holds the spotlight, and thoughts are directed towards the future. California has grown fantastically in recent years—more than any other state in the Union—and Los Angeles has been the centre of this growth. Small wonder, then, that the public supports new music and new musical undertakings. It is accustomed to newness; no weighty tradition bogs it down. There is a freshness in the California atmosphere that is sometimes naïve; but anything is possible here.

The rapid growth of Los Angeles explains the physical aspect of the city, which spreads out over an insanely large area, makes a car an absolute necessity, and divides the metropolis into smaller communities, each having its own cultural life. From Santa Monica, the most westerly, to Altadena, one of the eastern sections of Greater Los Angeles, is something like thirty miles. Even London, with three times the population, seems compact compared to this monster. Skyscrapers are unknown, for the danger of earthquake makes it unsafe to build higher than a limited number of stories. There is no section corresponding to New York's Wall Street, where tall buildings tower on either side of the street; Los Angeles reaches out, not up.

Then there is the climate—mild and sunshiny, if somewhat enervating—which attracts people from all over the world. The all-year-round warm days and cool nights have played an important part in the city's growth. It is largely because of the climate that Stravinsky and Schönberg have chosen to live in the Los Angeles area.

Other composers (e.g. Toch, Korngold and Castelnuovo-Tedesco) are affiliated with Hollywood studios. Still others, such as Ingolf Dahl, George Tremblay and Halsey Stevens, teach in the many colleges and universities which are situated in the region (University of Southern California, University of California at Los Angeles, Occidental College, City College of Los Angeles, etc.).

For these and perhaps for other reasons as well, the musical life of Los Angeles is becoming yearly more impressive. Particularly outstanding is a unique organization called "Evenings on the Roof". The name betrays its origin. Thirteen years ago an idealistic and enterprising musician, Peter Yates, and his pianist wife, began giving a modest series of chamber music concerts on the "roof" of their typically Californian-styled house; like many houses of that region, theirs is built on a hill, so that the roof of one storey is at the same time a sort of patio for the next. From a small, informal affair, these concerts have grown in size and frequency. They soon were moved to a small, then to a larger concert hall and were organized as a regular public concert series. The organization is now directed by its member-musicians, governed by a board of directors elected from its membership, and administered by an executive secretary, Mary Jeannette Brown, for whose co-operation in preparing this article I wish to express my thanks. "Evenings on the Roof" gives from twenty to thirty chamber music concerts a year, in which from sixty to eighty local musicians participate. Contemporary music has from the beginning played a leading rôle. During the two seasons between 1947 and 1949, nearly one hundred separate compositions by fifty living composers were performed; forty-five of these works were by Americans, thirty-nine by composers, native and foreign (including such as Stravinsky and Schönberg), residing in Southern California. In this way "Evenings on the Roof" practises what it preaches in saying: "Believing that our composers should write to be heard just as our musicians should practise to be heard, 'Evenings on the Roof' considers the stimulus of local creative activity one of its most important projects. We believe that a healthy creative life will help to produce a healthy community life in this city". The repertoire of the 1950-51 season includes Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*, Hindemith's Chamber Music No. 3, Poulenc's violin Sonata, Rieti's *Partita* for harpsichord and eight wind instruments, Palestrina's *Pope Marcellus Mass* and other infrequently heard works. According to established policy most programmes comprise one-third modern music and two-thirds music drawn from the standard repertoire of chamber works; concerts made up entirely of contemporary music are given from time to time.

Besides the "Roof" concerts various other organizations present regular chamber music series. The Coleman Concerts Association of Pasadena and the Los Angeles Music Guild serve primarily to bring world-renowned artists to Greater Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, founded and conducted by Harold Byrnes, presents four or five concerts yearly. The orchestra members and most of the soloists as well are Los Angeles musicians; repertoire is selected regardless of "box-office" appeal and includes an excellent representation of contemporary music. Then too, as in many American cities, the Los Angeles Museum presents weekly chamber music concerts, chiefly by local musicians. These concerts, which are given on Sunday afternoons throughout the entire year, are open to the public without charge and reach a vast audience.

The two great universities situated in Los Angeles also give numerous concerts and recitals, some by faculty members, some by advanced students, and others by artists brought from outside. One of the most interesting developments in American musical life of recent years has been the establishment by colleges and universities of resident chamber music *ensembles* composed of professional players who enjoy the status of regular faculty members. Thus, the Hungarian Quartet play regular series at the University

of Southern California, the Roth and Paganini quartets appear at the University of California at Los Angeles, and the Alma Trio is heard at Occidental College. Musical activity in the two universities is, indeed, intense and on a high level. Both institutions have their own student orchestras and choruses and offer students a splendid opportunity to obtain a well-rounded musical education.

Opera in English has taken hold in Los Angeles. The University of Southern California has established an opera department headed by Carl Ebert, of European and Glyndebourne fame, and has produced, with local talent, such works as Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Britten's *Albert Herring*. The newly-founded County Opera Guild brought out in its first season *The Marriage of Figaro*, produced by Richard Lert, and in its second *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and *The Bartered Bride*. The University of California at Los Angeles has given *The Beggar's Opera* of Britten, and Los Angeles City College has also done a number of rarely heard short operas. Besides these local productions, the San Francisco Opera Company plays a short fall season each year, with world-famous singers and conductors. Construction is already under way on a splendid large opera house; when it is completed, the plan is to establish a first-class opera company for the city of Los Angeles.

Of the several orchestras which play in the metropolitan area, the best and most important is the Los Angeles Philharmonic, conducted by Alfred Wallenstein. Besides the "home" season of some twenty-five concerts, this orchestra also makes an extensive circuit of surrounding communities. During the summer months the Philharmonic moves to the famous (and infamous) Hollywood Bowl, where "big name" conductors and soloists appear in a standard, semi-classical and popular repertoire (and occasionally in opera). The Bowl itself is mammoth and most of the audience hears the music through amplifiers. This fact, plus the "popular" type of repertoire, plus the mediocrity of the performances which with few exceptions are under-rehearsed, make the highly-publicized Bowl concerts anything but a musical delight. The setting, on the other hand, is indescribably beautiful, the Bowl being surrounded on three "sides" (if a bowl can be said to have sides) by high hills. This situation has occasionally led to remarkable shenanigans, as when during a performance of *Walküre* riders and horses appeared spotlighted on the neighbouring hills.

A recent development of great interest is the founding of symphony orchestras in the various communities comprising Greater Los Angeles. Pasadena, Santa Monica, Inglewood, Highland Park, Burbank and others now have their own orchestras, ranging in quality from semi-amateur to professional, which play short seasons for the "home folks". Their existence stems largely from the spread-out geography of the city, which causes the decentralization of much of the life of Los Angeles; it reflects as well the growing desire on the part of smaller American cities and communities throughout the country to maintain cultural activities of their own; and it testifies to the large amount of wealth concentrated in this area. The expansion of such local activities is extremely beneficial to the cultural life of the country as a whole, for these local orchestras, theatre, museums, discussion centres, art galleries and the like, form the bases, so to speak, of a national cultural pyramid. They encourage the local citizenry to participate in cultural matters which they can call their own, and they encourage local artists to contribute their best to the community and ultimately to the nation.

The growth in recent years of choral organizations in Los Angeles represents another aspect of increasing popular participation in music. The most advanced of these, from the standpoint of repertoire and technical ability, is the newly-founded Roger Wagner Chorale, which performs the masterpieces of choral literature. Several of the churches, moreover, maintain excellent choirs, which appear in concert as well as in the sanctuary, and the City Bureau of Music promotes choral singing in all forms as part of its recreational programme.

At the other end of the musical spectrum, the "top professional", a number of recital series, run by concert agencies, bring world-famous artists to Los Angeles in solo recitals. Not a small number of "big names" are residents of the area: Rubinstein, Heifetz, Szigeti,

Piatigorsky, Lotte Lehmann, Bruno Walter, Joseph Schuster and many others. Indeed, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the Los Angeles area has one of the greatest concentrations of first-class performing artists in the world, thanks partly to the climate and partly to the movie studios.

American radio, with its system of commercial sponsorship, is notoriously weak in its support of serious, and particularly contemporary music. Whereas, in Europe and England, a State-subsidized radio considers itself obliged to include a certain basic proportion of such music in its schedule, most of the radio time in America is bought by various sponsors whose interests are strictly commercial and in no sense cultural. Serious music, therefore, is in general relegated to a "sustaining" basis, and is heard infrequently and at odd hours, when no sponsor wants to pay for the time. The series of broadcasts organized by Julius Toldi called "Music of To-day", which originates in Hollywood, therefore deserves special commendation. These half-hour concerts, played by local musicians, are transmitted by the American Broadcasting Company over a nation-wide network and are also heard in Europe. They are made up entirely of serious music by contemporary composers of all nationalities.

Finally, mention should be made of two annual musical events which take place near Los Angeles and are closely bound up with that city's musical life. The Santa Barbara Music Academy, now in its third year, is a summer school located in Santa Barbara (not far north of Los Angeles), which fulfils somewhat the same function as Tanglewood does in the East. An excellent faculty, including Darius Milhaud, the talented young American composer Charles Jones, Richard Lert, Soulima Stravinsky and many others, offers instruction; numerous concerts complete the school's programme.

In the Ojai Valley, some eighty miles from Los Angeles, the annual May Festival presents a series of chamber music, choral and orchestral concerts, as well as operatic productions, which are remarkable for their variety and interesting repertoire; contemporary music is well represented. The orchestra, made up of Los Angeles musicians, plays under the direction of the brilliant young American conductor Thor Johnson, regular conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

Three years had passed since my last visit to Los Angeles, and I was astounded and even bewildered by the pace at which music, like everything else, is moving in this incredible city. As a loyal New Yorker, I had some difficulty in bringing myself to admit what I saw before my very eyes. During these three years little has changed in New York; in some respects (*e.g.* radio) one even notes a slight retrogression. But in Los Angeles older organizations had blossomed, a host of new ones had been founded, the quality of musical activity had improved.

"It could only happen in California".

Random Thoughts on LP

BY

JOSEPH ENOCK

I WOULD like to say at the outset that these remarks and comments are a few purely personal opinions and thoughts regarding LP records generally. If, by chance, I have given offence in any way, I would plead for indulgence on the score that it was quite unintentional and due, perhaps, to over-enthusiasm.

The Decca Co., I feel, deserve the highest tribute for their magnificent contribution to the art of music in making LP records and instruments available to the British public. I feel, too, that their commercial enterprise should be gratefully recognized by all gramophiles. Launching LP must have been a ticklish business in every way and without those risks having been taken we should not yet have had it.

Because LP necessitates the creation of a new set of electro-mechanical standards, tolerances and limits, and in addition embodies as a regular part of the proceedings another process—the tape—it might well be regarded as another kind of gramophone, and not just an extension of 78. If this view is accepted, we should consider ourselves fortunate in not having to purchase complete new instruments, still being able to utilize the two most expensive items in our 78 gramophones, *viz.* the amplifier and the loud-speaker.

Opinions have been expressed that LP will soon supersede 78, but I do not subscribe to these theories. I regard LP as a complement to 78, supplying what is required musically but unobtainable from 78—a sort of “missing link” in the gramophone world. And both LP and 78 have their proper place there. Moreover, what is sauce for the 78 goose is seldom sauce for the LP gander. For instance, what happens on LP with works that go comfortably on one side of a 12-inch 78? Does one arrange a series of separated “bands” of 4½ minutes each? And if so, who is clever enough to collate these items so that everyone will be pleased? Are we going to desert our old faithful 78, a friend of fifty years standing? I think that this question is answered quite adequately by Eliza in Shaw's *Pygmalion*.

Naturally, all new projects have their teething troubles, but the way those of LP are being tackled seems to me most creditable. It must be a terrifying experience for a manufacturer to trust his precious baby—much more so if it is in the form of delicate scientific apparatus—in the none-too-careful hands of the public. LP has come through this gruelling test very well.

One has heard a lot of talk generally on the line that “Oh the new ones are not a patch on the old ones” (have I not heard this about motor cars?), but I do not feel that the speakers had given much serious thought to the matter or had much personal experience of the new thing. One must not forget, too, that in order to obtain the full flavour and colour of LP records it is essential to listen to them on equipment of a higher standard than that necessary for 78, *i.e.* the distortion inherent in the equipment must be considerably less.

LP records should have a strong appeal to those critically-minded musical people who hitherto have been somewhat luke-warm (and justifiably so) about listening seriously to the gramophone. For in LP their two strongest objections—scratch (surface noise) and the breaks necessitated every 4½ minutes—have been virtually eliminated. The result is that one is able to concentrate fully on the music without the distractions of needle hiss and breaking the continuity every few minutes.

In fact, it might be true to say that one can now concentrate even better than under “live” conditions. When one is listening to records (usually in the comfort and quiet of the home) there is no movement of any sort associated with the music, no conductor's action to criticize, no special member of the orchestra to watch, no soloist to please the eye (or otherwise)—in effect, there is no “vision” to beguile one to spend any additional

thought: the point being that the more interesting the vision, the more it must distract one from complete concentration on the music. This virtue is always present to some extent when listening to records of any sort, but with LP it is 100 per cent. effective.

From personal experience I would endorse a well-known critic's opinion that "when LPs are good they are very, very good, and when they are bad they are 'orrid.'" I also agree with a very eminent authority on music and gramophone who expressed the thought that we are in danger of becoming conditioned to a new "tone" in reproduced music—that of LP "tone".

I feel strongly that these two insidious evils—violent fluctuations in standard and the acceptance of synthetic "tone"—should be resisted to the last ditch. We must get "tough" over any lowering of the artistic standard—however slight it appears to be—by commercial dictates. But we must be constructive in our criticisms and not merely destructive, and we must try to understand commercial limitations and resources. Surely it is far more helpful all round to say what one *does* want, instead of harping on what one does *not* want. On this basis I enter into friendly battle with the Decca Co. by making one or two criticisms.

First, the question of tape. With the present standard of recording on and dubbing from tape, the use of it is, to my mind, a definite disadvantage artistically, and one must conclude therefore that there is some over-riding commercial reason for employing the process. With one notable exception, I have not yet heard an LP record (nor, for that matter, many modern 78s) where one was not conscious of the interposition of tape, and, until the standards of the additional processes entailed by the use of tape are raised to such a level that there is no audible sign of its presence, I feel that by hook or by crook "direct" recordings on wax should be made. I appreciate, however, that this is not practicable commercially to any great extent at present. But could not research be directed towards finding a way to make it commercially practicable?

I have been given many explanations for the use of tape, but they all boil down to two general reasons; first, that it is a convenient and cheap method of recording, and second, that under present conditions at recording sessions artists are said to be unable to perform accurately enough for *recording purposes* for more than five minutes or so at a stretch.

The truth of the first is overwhelming and scarcely needs comment. Tape is a most convenient and practical method of recording. It is always ready for instant use, it can be stopped and re-started at will, it can be played back at once without sustaining damage, it can be "edited" (preserve us from bad "editors"!), it can be erased and used again, and there is virtually no time-limit as far as music is concerned. None of these attributes is to be found in wax.

It is the second reason that causes me uneasiness. If it is a fact that under present recording conditions artists are not able to perform well enough for more than a few minutes on end, then there surely must be something wrong with either the artists or the recording conditions. Let us suppose that the first may be ruled out at once.

I have attended several recording sessions and at each, in varying degree, I felt that the artists were required to perform under conditions which did not exactly help them to give of their best. The "atmosphere" seemed chilly and strictly commercial—cold-blooded engineers with stop-watches and things—and there was a practically empty hall without any audience to inspire the artists. In fact, it seemed to be a business, and not a musical "party".

I have been wondering if, as a first step towards better things, it would be possible to change the "key-note" at recording sessions to that of music? Also, whether it would be possible for artists and engineers to get together more for informal personal discussions regarding each other's difficulties. After all, recording is essentially a matter of mutual understanding between the various parties—team-work *par excellence* for the purpose of producing music in recorded form. I cannot help thinking that a considerable elevation of the artistic level would follow, and, I hope, a corresponding increase in commercial return.

There is no doubt that this raising of the musical standard would be immeasurably increased if a proper audience were present, and to my mind this would be the ideal "set-up". (Someone would have to invent an automatic cough suppressor first of all, however!) The difficulties of doing this must be appalling and, I should have thought, almost insurmountable. But I have noticed that recordings of public performances have a very high artistic standard coupled with a vital, indefinable "atmosphere" which even the coughs do not spoil. I would quote as an example Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, recorded at a public performance in Vienna in 1936.

Which brings me to my second criticism—balance between soloists and the rest of the music texture. In the vast majority of such issues the soloist is grotesquely over-balanced and larger than life. I would plead with the engineers that we want to hear on record what we hear in live music *as members of an audience*. We want to hear the over-all effect of the performance—not a "close-up" of the soloist. Here again there are technical difficulties, but if the research people have not yet solved the problem, could they concentrate on it until they have? Again I would quote *Das Lied von der Erde*, but this time as an excellent example of what is required as regards balance. Here, all sections of the orchestra and both the voices are extremely well-defined but in their proper perspective and relationship with each other. The over-all effect is of a high order, musically.

Another point that I would criticize concerns "pre-emphasis" on LPs. Decca, I feel, have overdone this and it would be beneficial to reduce it to the scale of *ffr* 78s. I am of the opinion that although pre-emphasis may be corrected electrically, it cannot be corrected mechanically. The stylus, therefore, is inclined to revolt against the "un-arithmetical" wave-form and bestow an unwanted colouration on the reproduction. This is particularly noticeable in the high strings. And if the excellent silent surface of some LP issues is maintained there should be no danger of appreciably altering the signal/surface-noise ratio.

Hallé Concerts: Winter 1950-51

BY

JOHN BOULTON

ON paper, the current Hallé prospectus seemed in no way exceptional. But in fact this season, so far, has been one of the most interesting we have had since Barbirolli took over. He himself has been responsible for some absolutely first-rate performances, and the orchestra has played consistently to the standards it has established with him. There can scarcely be higher praise than this: some programmes may have been dull, but *no* performance has been less than good and no performance of a great work has been other than first-class.

Let us start with one truly great performance. Near the end of the period here reviewed, we heard a complete concert version of Gluck's *Orfeo*. It was tremendous, flawless, and moving as only true beauty newly-lighted can be moving. Last heard here in 1902, the present orchestra and choir can have had no knowledge of the work. Barbirolli himself had never conducted it before. That they could together have re-created it to standards like this is a tribute to the way this orchestra and choir are rehearsed. Clearly inspired by what went on around her, Kathleen Ferrier's *Orfeo* was the best thing we have heard from any English contralto in many years. The audience was markedly smaller than is normal at Sunday Concerts. This comes largely from a policy of purposely cultivating a "popular" Sunday audience for King's Hall, the only place big enough to accommodate orchestra and choir. *Orfeo* was not "popular".

The remaining choral concert took in Britten's *Spring Symphony*. All we remember with any pleasure of this work's first Hallé performance is "*When as the Rye reach to the*

chin" and "*Driving Boy*" which comprise the movement for boys' voices, and "*Soomer is icoomin in*" with which the long dead hand of good John of Fornsete draws a mellowing veil over Mr. Britten's odd effort.

The Albert Hall series opened with a programme including Bax's *Left Hand Concerto*. The only reason for any composer to write a concerto for one hand is that he should know a one-handed pianist in need of something to play. Harriet Cohen is (or, more happily, was) in that case, and both she and Sir Arnold have made the best of the matter; the Hallé did them very proud. A concerto from this composer for two hands would be welcome; it could easily be twice as good as his work for one.

The fine Symphony No. 3 of Roussel was given a worthy first performance, Barbirolli keeping the necessary taut vigilance over its adventurous rhythms. At the same concert the American cellist, Joseph Schuster, was soloist in the best live performance of Schumann's Concerto we remember hearing in this country.

Early in the season, Sir John went abroad, and the Hallé played under Groves, Schmidt-Isserstedt and Kletzki. We were unable to attend the first of these, but Groves' concert should be mentioned if only for the excellence of a programme which gave the first Hallé performance of Tippett's best work—the Concerto for double string orchestra, and Schumann's B♭ Symphony. Groves might well become a regular Hallé visitor. This Manchester conductor is always prepared to tackle the less-known works, and his stature has grown greatly with the years of his B.B.C. experience. Schmidt-Isserstedt was unfortunate in arriving during the 'flu epidemic. A reading of Bruckner's 3rd Symphony with some nineteen substitutes playing for twenty-odd stricken members of the orchestra could have been a *débâcle*. In fact, it was a more than competent performance; the orchestra rose to the occasion and much credit for this undoubtedly lay with the personality of this fine conductor. He produced a *Till Eulenspiegel* which electrified orchestra and audience alike.

Kletzki, at the first of his two concerts, invaded the resident maestro's territory with *Daphnis and Chloe*, 2nd suite. Sir John has taught us our Ravel with a more than thorough frequency, and Kletzki added nothing to the lesson. His Brahms 4th Symphony was another matter, and we shall remember his performance as a brighter light of the season. Our disappointment that 'flu, sparing nobody, kept us from Kletzki's presentation of the Mahler 4th Symphony was in no way softened by a hearing of Britten's *Serenade* for tenor, horn and strings under him. The playing was beautiful. But the occasion of Manchester's first hearing of this work did nothing to us beyond pointing the astonishing artistry of Dennis Brain and reminding us of William Blake's prophetic greatness. Mr. Britten chose his poem well. Blake's "invisible worm" to Britten's clever music conjured up an image most apposite: some such mystic, wormy agency is eating at the heart of much modern British composition.

On his return from conducting in Australia, Barbirolli at once asserted himself. Before taking us by storm with the magnificent *Orfeo*, he resumed the Albert Hall concerts with another first Hallé performance of note: Chausson's *Poème de l'Amour et de la Mer*, in which Kathleen Ferrier sang memorably. This was splendid. With all due respect to a fine artist, we say that the musicianship exhibited by all concerned rendered practically negligible the effect of Miss Ferrier's schoolgirl French diction. (Her Italian in *Orfeo* was excellent; perhaps Glyndebourne had helped in that.) At the same concert we had a previously unheard dance movement by Maurice Duruflé, a Dukas pastiche, no doubt awarded to the orchestra as a *feste* for reunion. They enjoyed it more than we. Schubert's great C major Symphony we hear often. But again, with a truly fine rendering, Sir John proved how more nearly he approaches the great Germans *via* Schubert than by any other route.

Other novel experiences have been Mozart's *Adagio and Fugue*, K.546, Sibelius' *King Christian Suite*, both welcome, and Ibert's *Escales*, less so, all under Barbirolli. Boyd Neel has given all six *Brandenburg* concertos to crowded audiences. It is a pity to have to criticize the work of his orchestra in any way. But it really is nonsense to use a harpsichord for Bach's keyboard passage work in a hall holding thirteen hundred people.

Almost nobody heard the instrument in two concerts which otherwise were impeccable. A word must be spared for the greatness of George Eskdale's performances on the *clarino* trumpet.

Two interrelated circumstances have given the season a special interest. We have, with Sir John's *Abwesenheit*, seen that the orchestra can give all of its best under visiting conductors IF THEY ARE GOOD ENOUGH. On the occasions of his *Lebewohl* and *Wiedersehen* we have observed again the astonishing and moving degree of affection his audiences and colleagues have for him, all of it, we think, deserved.

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As a pendant to the above we have to report the recent illness of Sir John Barbirolli, fortunately no longer serious, which has provided for still more guest conductors.

George Weldon undertook a programme which included Ravel's piano Concerto and Stravinsky's Symphony in its first Hallé performance. This was daring, but Weldon secured some excellent playing. The Concerto came off completely whilst his first, and our first, experience of the Symphony was by no means unrewarding. In it Stravinsky looks back to the days before neo-classicism, as we long believed that sooner or later he would. He has fashioned a work of refined structure and high idiomatic interest and excitement. We believe it will live.

Performances of Beethoven's fourth piano Concerto and Brahms' first Symphony were taken over by Charles Groves, whose handling of the orchestra reinforces what we have said of him. The soloist in the Ravel and Beethoven concertos was Monique Haas and it must be said that the first-named work was magnificently performed. This young pianist is on the way to becoming our foremost exponent of French keyboard music.

Elgar's violin Concerto and the second Symphony of Dvořák were conducted by Hugo Rignold with Raymond Cohen as solo violin. Mr. Cohen attacked the Concerto with great confidence and missed none of the larger opportunities for imaginative musicianship; yet the performance as a whole was not more than adequate. Mr. Rignold made up for this, or nearly so, with a very good performance of the Dvořák.

A programme made up of symphonies Nos. 39, 40 and 41 of Mozart, designed by Barbirolli (whose chagrin at not being present to conduct it was immense), was undertaken by Ernest Ansermet. This programme represents Mozart in the round. In these three works is contained some part of every facet of his art, of everything essential to his music; and a successful presentation of all twelve movements, *seriatim*, calls for a degree of insight far beyond that which might adequately re-create a single symphony. Ansermet did not succeed, and that despite some beautiful work by the orchestra. Generally, we felt the *tempi* in the E flat and G minor works to be throughout too slow; but there was much more to it than that. We ought to record an exhilarating performance of the *Jupiter* and a feeling of something very much missing elsewhere!

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Film Music and Beyond

"The main advantage of the method of composing with twelve tones is its unifying effect."

"Everyone has his own manner of obeying rules derived from the treatment of twelve tones."

(Arnold Schönberg, 1941 and 1950 respectively.)

ROMAN VLAD (b. 1919)

I. BIOGRAPHY

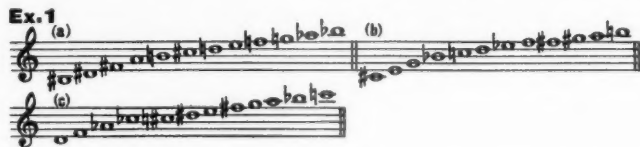
As yet, little is known outside Italy about this remarkably gifted, Roumanian-born composer. The January, 1950, issue of *La Rassegna Musicale* gives (without comment) a fairly complete and indeed considerable list of his works. They include thirty-two film scores.

After completing his studies at the Conservatoire in Czernowitz, his home town, in 1938, Vlad moved to Rome, where he has been living since. He studied piano and composition under Casella at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, and is now active not only as a composer, but also as pianist, lecturer and writer on music. In the latter capacity we find him on the Editorial Board of *L'Immagine*. In 1942 he won an "Enesco Prize" for his *Sinfonietta* for chamber orchestra (1941), while in 1950 he received the "Nastro d'Argento" (a kind of Italian "Oscar") for the best film music of 1949-50, i.e. for his entire cinematic output during that season.

II. ANALYSIS

His *La Beauté du Diable* (1949) and *Domenica d'Agosto* (1950) have recently reached this country. The latter score (running under the title *Sunday in August*), a light pastiche in D major, is as skilful as it is uninteresting; probably the director (L. Emmer) wanted the stuff that way. The significance of the music to *La Beauté du Diable*, on the other hand, extends beyond the cinema. I went to hear it twice.

To use a little-known term of Schönberg's, Vlad is "pantonalist". In the present film music, the (partly folkloristic) diatonic element is glaringly obtrusive, contributing not only to the necessarily simple development of dramatic contrasts and to the characterization, but doubtless also to the satisfaction of the film director (René Clair), who must in fact feel quite at home in the score's tenacious C major and minor within a G major frame. At the same time, the reader of this journal will hardly have any difficulty in actually hearing the unifying application of the twelve-tone technique. The axes of the co-ordinates that traverse the music's dodecaphonic space are shown in Ex. 1: a



row with two transpositions, comprising (1) a diminished seventh chord whose desires for resolutions are curbed by (2) an eight-note scale with halves of equal intervals. From Ex. 1b and c, for instance, is drawn the principal theme of the film (Ex. 2) which functions as a motto and is not only varied and developed, but can exchange the rôles of antecedent and consequent; thus, before Faust's scene with the Princess, the "question" of the diminished-fifth-phrase becomes as it were rhetorical, preceded as it is by the "answer"

Ex. 2



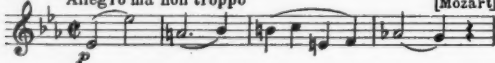
Ex. 3 Allegro con fuoco

[Dvořák]



Ex. 4 Allegro ma non troppo

[Mozart]



of the perfect fourth. Earlier in the film, as Faust regains his youth, we hear what presently proves to be the film's Youth motif (Ex. 5): according to Romantic film (directors')

Ex. 5



conventions, a pastiche of the Italian folk style which, however, is built into the twelve-tonal space (see Ex. 6), the polytonal complexes being absorbed by the eight-note modes

Ex. 6

Solo Violins

Vibraphone

Strings



(see Ex. 1) to which they are "tonal" (*leiteneigen*). Melodically, too, the folkly tune is integrated into the system of co-ordinates: Ex. 7.

Ex. 7



III. CRITICISM

(a) *General*.—The obvious purposes of this system are (1) *stylistic homogeneity* and (2) *formal unity* between the atonal and the diatonic material. Both are attained, but the latter not without audible cost. Despite the "atonal" bits and pieces which the composer has smuggled into the score, that is to say, the over-riding impression is one of an unvaried C-tonality. Since the diatonic material strongly preponderates, the greater and in fact basic part of the score is over-unified, or, to be exact, *doubly* unified: "tonally" and "atonally". The weakness of our criticism, however, lies in the absence of a desirable alternative. Without the twelve-tonal technique, the score as a whole would have fallen to pieces, and without the predominance of diatonicism, René Clair would. There remained the possibility of sacrificing the "atonal" material—the most valuable aspect of the entire film. The problem, then, becomes sociological and economic.

The idiom sometimes lacks individuality. Largely this is no doubt due to the score's concessions to diatonicism, but partly also to immaturity.

(b) *Particular*.—For instance, with disarming innocence, the C minor storm music lifts (more or less bodily) the *stretto* diminutions from the coda of the *Egmont* Overture. Nor are the thematic configurations throughout spontaneous and functional. The F sharp in the main theme itself (see Ex. 2) sounds both constructed and not sufficiently constructive—constructed because the note takes pains not to be G, unconstructive because apart from this negative meaning it hasn't much horizontal function. A similar criticism applies to the B natural in the opening of Dvořák's E flat piano Quartet (Ex. 3): it is not a B flat and that is all there is to it. Mozart, on the other hand, invested such a chromatic negation with intensely positive melodic and harmonic significance. In the fourth "Haydn" Quartet—Ex. 4: as it happens in the same key, at the same structural stage, and with the same (string unison) texture as Ex. 3—he gives an unequalled example of how to handle the dislocation over which Vlad fails. As far as the A natural, nobody (except a Mozart) could say that the idea was good, and one may excusably deem it forced. But the continuation discloses the significance of the disorganization, using it in fact as an essential element in a strong and original organization.

IV. PERSPECTIVE

For the rest, the music for *La Beauté du Diable* is admirable. In his recent book, *Style and Idea*,* Schönberg foresees the time "when the ability to draw thematic material from a basic set of twelve tones will be an unconditional prerequisite for obtaining admission into the composition class of a conservatory". Meanwhile, film music of the present kind and quality, reaching as it does an otherwise unapproachable multitude of unconscious musical minds, is a powerful help towards the public's intuitive understanding of such material.

H. K.

* See review on pp. 170-1 [ED.].

First Performances¹

FOR ONCE A SYMPHONY

RAWSTHORNE'S new Symphony is a landmark in the development of our age's symphonic thought (I am evading the qualification "English" because it could lead to misunderstandings: the composer's style and forms are of Continental descent) and, at the same time, shows a new stage in his own development. For the latter reason it has aroused a shamefully half-hearted response in those who like what they know: this new Rawsthorne perturbed, maybe even offended them. Had the reception, particularly among the critics, been more enthusiastic, we would perhaps by now have heard more than a single and bad performance of the work (BBC Symphony Orchestra under Boult, Albert Hall, 15th November), and it might even have been chosen for one of the Festival concerts. However that may be, the new Rawsthorne was to be foreseen and -heard. In a paper on *Musical Self-Contempt in Britain*, delivered to the British Psychological Society eleven days before the first performance of the work, I developed the following prognosis from my analysis of Rawsthorne's stylistic and structural approach:—

... this would mean that group self-contempt² has prompted the thoroughly different personalities of Elgar and Rawsthorne to compensate for different failures of the British tradition. And even if Rawsthorne has never had any such intention, the fact remains that he is achieving this compensation or rehabilitation of the British tradition by dint of a pre-occupation with continental methods such as can hardly be imagined without group self-contempt. In any case, it must not ... be assumed that Rawsthorne is ... quite so uninterested in the Austro-German tradition as his music so often suggests; ... the aforementioned displacement of affect within his super-ego, from the dominating group [the Austrian symphonists] on to pre-classical continentals, is not likely to be complete. ... Shortly, we shall be hearing the first performance of [his] Symphony, wherein we shall perhaps find some strong reminder that the rôle of the Austro-German symphonic tradition in the structure of his group self-contempt is by no means latent. ...

And sure enough, the Symphony shows the composer's formal ideals wheeling round from Corelli and Bach to Haydn. (I do not say "progressing" because I want to avoid any implication of comparative evaluation.) For it is, I submit, to Haydn's methods in particular that one can trace the Symphony's daring and extensive modulatory excursions as well as its intensive developmental technique not only in the development section proper, but in every possible transition. At the same time, I have to confess to my inability to explain how the composer achieved the extended bithematic unity of the first movement's fully worked-out sonata-form despite no more than a fleeting residence in the home tonality (G minor, as neither the title of the Symphony nor the composer's programme note indicated); this question must be left to a future hearing. The surprisingly cursory programme note made no mention of the first movements' form, nor of the Symphony's tonal structure, nor of any of its various subtle cyclicisms; I think Mahler was quite right when he insisted that the hearer should notice such thematic relations. Rawsthorne vaguely refers, for instance, to the principal subject's "expanding into a lengthy paragraph punctuated by a descending cadential phrase",

¹ See also pp. 152 and 156. In the March issue of *Music Survey* I wrote that in the present article I would try to assemble my evidence for my first evaluations of Rawsthorne's new Symphony, Cooke's oboe Quartet, Fricker's violin Sonata, Gerhard's viola Sonata, and, possibly, Timothy Moore's trumpet Concerto. In view of the facts that (1) space in the present issue is limited because the last one was a special number that did not contain the usual review features; (2) a more than telegraphic account of my first impressions of Rawsthorne's Symphony might be welcomed in an issue which contains a critical essay on the composer's music; (3) this Symphony is by far the best as well as so far the most underestimated novelty on my programme, I have decided to postpone my examination of the other works whose performances have, moreover, taken place more recently. At the same time I am retaining my usual pluralistic title—as a tribute to a composer the first performance of whose most recent major work was a more important event than many, if not most first performances discussed in this feature on previous occasions.

² For a description of the concept of "group self-contempt" the musician is referred to my "Resistances to Britten's Music: Their Psychology" in Vol. II, No. 4 (Spring, 1950) of *Music Survey*.

but does not say that this phrase, which (to be precise) punctuates the transition to the transition to the second subject, gradually turns out to be a main motive in the entire structure (Haydn!), treated as it is not only by the development section, but also by the trio-like middle section of the scherzo; in the last movement, moreover, it reappears after the second subject in an augmented variant. Such cyclic mechanisms—the finale also alludes to the slow movement—do not, however, seem to assist the work toward a convincing conclusion (in G major); even upon no more than a nodding acquaintance with the individual characteristics of the structure one cannot help asking oneself whether the Symphony had not better close with the extremely concise scherzo, wherein the first movement's first subject as well as the slow movement reassert themselves: these cyclic relations exert a strongly unifying, indeed somewhat rounding influence. What would in that case be the progressive tonality of the whole work from G minor to the submediant minor would not, I think, have a disorganizing effect; and an open end is better than a loose one.

If the first movement is a structural achievement against nowadays overwhelming odds, the slow one is no less unique, though from another aspect: such elementally spontaneous emotionality, chaste yet deep-rooted, and expressed with such supreme assurance, is quite un-"contemporary". Pressing forward from C minor (the relative minor of the classical degree for the slow movement of a work in a minor key) to E major, and developing beyond all sentimentality, the ternary build lets one divine how much it will disclose beneath its immediate appeal upon further hearings. From the romantic middle-section in the end-key's dominant grows the *fortissimo* culmination of the movement: the resumption of its introductory theme; the climactic effect is, I think, in no small measure due to the first reappearance here of the first movement's (and the whole Symphony's) basic tonality.

In sum, the work offers masterly solutions to two of the three greatest symphonic problems, *i.e.* the sonata problem and the high task and test of the slow movement; whereas it does not seem to have overcome the third, *i.e.* the—ever since the Romantic age—painfully noticeable finale problem.

Finally, a footnote of greater psychological than musical significance:—

[From memory]

MAY, 1950, A CAFÉ IN FLORENCE

Rawsthorne: I say, I passed a cinema just now on my walk, they're now showing *Saraband for Dead Lovers* here. I wrote the music for this. Do you know Corelli's *Follia*?

H. K.: Yes.

R.: A great piece. I used it in this film.

H. K.: If I remember rightly, you also used it in the slow movement of your Concerto for string orchestra.

R. (puzzled, after a pause): Yes.

Perhaps I should add that this inspired and perfectly shaped slow movement does not just avail itself of the tune or the ground bass (which isn't Corelli's), but, if I can trust my recollection, of an actual and pretty distant variation. And perhaps I am right in concluding from Rawsthorne's reaction that what one might call his developing quotation was unconscious. Now, a short time ago I saw part of the recent film *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*, with music by Rawsthorne. At the F major end, during the credits, I was surprised to hear a comparatively joyful tune from which the basic motive of the film (or at any rate of the part I heard) turned out to have derived, and which was closely, though no doubt again unconsciously, related to the minuet from Haydn's last Symphony, the submediant being replaced by the flat sixth. Thus Rawsthorne's deep and wide turn from Corelli to Haydn is reflected in little externals.

A composer uses another's material for various reasons, motives, purposes, and with varying artistic results. When Vlad quotes Beethoven unconsciously (see p. 149), he imitates unintentionally: his style has not yet fully matured. When Mozart quotes Boccherini (see *Music Review*, November, 1947) he improves him. But when a master unintentionally quotes his ancient masters, one's heart gets double value: the musical interest of what his creativeness does with the material, and the human interest of a "theft" that is a humble gift: an act of unconscious homage which is thus more spontaneous than anything Beethoven, Schumann, Liszt, Reger, Ernst Pepping and many lesser ones ever did with the notes of Bach's name; and, as a tribute, much more touching.

H. K.

Concerts and Opera

BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA, C. IGOR MARKEVITCH, WITH SIDNEY SUTCLIFFE

Kingsway Hall, 22nd January

Classical Symphony, Strauss' Oboe Concerto, Suites: *El Amor Brujo* (Fallá),
Pulcinella and "II" (Stravinsky)

"CONCERT of Twentieth Century Music" the programme said. Our own title would have been more appropriate: the concert comprised a well-chosen variety of those masterly death-masks of the classical and romantic past (in one instance, of the composer's own) upon which many a modern craftsman models his modish stuff.

The *Classical Symphony* one would enjoy with fewer emotional reservations if one were not acquainted with the latest Prokofiev, *i.e.* his less intentionally classical symphonies No. 5 and 6, whereas we would have taken greater pleasure in Mr. Sutcliffe's good performance of the oboe Concerto, had we not known the earlier Strauss. It is Stravinsky who remains the greatest master of retrospection: his *Pulcinella* suite wins rather than loses in interest when heard against his later, developed and creative neo-classicism.

To judge the conductor in general and the balance in gruesome particular was not easy in the Hall's acoustic circumstances; from the standpoint of interpretation these works are not difficult.

The only work on the programme about which the audience probably knew nothing at all was the only work about which the programme note said nothing at all: Stravinsky's Suite II, a witty orchestration (1921) of his *Three Easy Pieces* for piano duet (1915) and of the "Gallop" from his *Five Easy Pieces* in the same medium (1917).

The concert was well attended: it is nice to do one's duty towards new music without having to hear any.

THE NEED FOR UNEDUCATION

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, C. RAYBOULD, WITH PRIMROSE

Albert Hall, 24th January

Gordon Jacob: *Suite* No. 3 (1st London perf.); Walton: *Viola Concerto*

I CAME gratefully late into Jacob's "Prelude", realizing that whatever I had missed, the argument was of the kind that loses none of its news if you miss it altogether. The *Suite* is in fact a sterile piece, bad for one's taste because it is nothing but tasteful. The problem of our time is how to remain uneducated: a mass of authoritatively sponsored first performances quench the music-lover's thirst for goodness by teaching him that there's something right about music about which there is nothing wrong. The musico-logical lullaby, "A lot of mediocre music is needed for the emergence of something good" won't do here despite its truth, for fertile mediocrity has to fail at the future, not at the past. But then we have also been taught, by those who made it their novel business to predict the present, that "the future can look after itself". How so (asks the sufficiently uneducated), if not even the present can?

Again, it is with marvelling respect for the singular qualities of a great virtuoso that one has yet to confess to one's considered ingratitude: Primrose's rendering, too, represented the dark forces of our age's education; indeed, the performance was all the darker for its brilliance. If Primrose can do it so well, the Dimroses don't see any reason why they shouldn't do it badly. "It" was (a) his playing violin on the viola, (b) his continuous and therefore unexpressive *molto espressivo*, and (c) the utility-emotionality of many an accent-laden stretch in the interpretation, where very subtle effects and yet subtler affectation took the place of true affect. In these circumstances it was an actual pleasure to hear the occasional roughness of his bowing, to hear that at times there was enough

spontaneous feeling to produce an unintentionally ugly sound: of beautified tone one had more than enough.

Secondly and secondarily, we have observed on more than one occasion that Mr. Primrose is fond of conducting, and would remind him in all modesty that while one conductor is rarely enough, two are always too many. H. K.

SADLER'S WELLS

DON CARLOS: 24th January

NOT a *Boccanegra*, and nothing could make it one. For the rest, Meyerbeer died in 1864, and he, who had laid the fortunes of the Paris Opéra, must still have overshadowed it in 1867, when the original version of this, Verdi's second French opera appeared. His first, *Les Vêpres siciliennes* (1855) had been similarly on a historico-political subject and there can be little doubt that the shrewd Italian, who always kept his public well in view, was guided in both cases by the example of *Les Huguenots* (1836). However much *Don Carlos* may have been hacked about since 1867 by Verdi himself and others (*i.e.* Ghizlanzoni, 1884; Sumner Austin, 1938; and Norman Tucker, 1951), shorn of its ballet, opening scene restored and curtailed, "telescoping" here and there, the scene of the King and the Inquisitor transferred to a later place, and the original ending of Schiller's play (on which the original librettists, Méry and du Locle, worked) restored—consult the *libretto* sold in the theatre for these things and Vincent Godefroy's most illuminating article in MUSIC REVIEW, XI, 4—you cannot, however much you may wish, get rid of the Meyerbeer *afflatus* and the evident object of Verdi to *épater tout Paris* as Weber's fellow-student under the Abbé Vogler had. That the Empress was a Spaniard is important, no doubt, but the other factor is *paramount*.

I came completely fresh and ignorant to this performance, and indeed only studied the *libretto* aforesaid after leaving the theatre: my judgment is purely impressionistic. The thing struck me as *patchy*, and I was unhappy not so much about the appalling abuse of the *grosse caisse* throughout and the obvious inferiority of the horns in the forest with which this production starts to their use in the third act of *Euryanthe* (I felt Weber also in the orchestral support of the final duet, *cf.* var. 7 of op. 28), as about divesting the whole of its materialistic splendour and endeavouring to present it as a work of genius, a *cri du coeur*. Of course the Gilbertian effects of the English translation ("Enter LERMA. *Ler.* The Grand Inquisitor!" One thought "Defer, defer to the Lord High Executioner" was coming), so inevitable at Sadler's Wells, contributed not a little to the general bareness. As it was, almost only one thing stood out perfectly rounded and artistic, the personality of Philip II, admirably put across (you could hear his every word, not so with Hervey Alan, the Moussorgskyish Grand Inquisitor, who was *vox et praeterea nihil*) by Stanley Clarkson. He was every inch a king all through, and his monologue in act II, scene 2, "She has no love for me", is something I shall always remember. The performance is worth attending for that alone. Roderigo (Frederick Sharp) is admirable in voice and delivery; as for the name-part, sung by James Johnston, it is competently sustained, but nothing can make this hero a lovable operatic character, robbed of his sweetheart by his own father and ravenously desired by his father's spiteful former mistress, not to say protected by the friend who dies trying to serve him—too much under the weather from start to finish, in short.

Of the women, Joan Hammond gives a dignified rendering of the Queen, but what stole the audience on the night I went was Amy Shuard's delivery of the *aria* that closes the second act, when she resolves to save Carlos after the Queen has dismissed her. The conflicting emotions, love, jealousy, despair at "fatal beauty" were realized intensively. One can see Amneris coming along in this character, though some of the Queen's music later is more *like* that given to the jealous creature in *Aida*. For my part I was most moved by Josephine Proust's handling of the highly original music given to Thibault, the page, who is dismissed so early and did not appear to take the curtain at the close. This, with the King's part, remains with me as memorable. The choruses are unexciting.

Michael Mudie's final *sforzandi*, of which I have spoken, sometimes imperilled the soloist's last notes, and the violin must be more exact with the high notes at the close of the Fontainebleau scene. The *décor* is very bare and the arch in the King's private chamber suggests a Victorian double drawing-room. Something tells me that *Robert le Diable* (with ballet), after this, might be a draw at the Wells. E. H. W. M.

THE VIENNESE SCHOOL?

WIENER KONZERTHAUS QUARTET (KAMPER-TITZE-WEISS-KVARDA),

WITH JORG DEMUS (PIANO)

Kingsway Hall, 5th February

Schubert: G major; Beethoven: Op. 109; Brahms: F minor Quintet

THE members of this quartet are not youngsters: each of them was well known in Austria before 1938, at any rate among musicians. Yet, as a body, they are only very partial representatives of the (admittedly heterogeneous) "Viennese school", a designation which struck my ear more than once during the interval of this recital. There was nothing in their playing of the chaste, strict and strictly musical ideals for which the Rosé Quartet (above all its unique leader) stood; nor, on the other hand, of the full-blooded, passionate *Musikantentum*, the ever-spontaneous, ever-inspired, ever-varied and ever-new interpretations of the Oskar Adler Quartet (whose cellist was Franz Schmidt), an esoteric *ensemble* with weekly performances before a select circle and relatively rare performances in public, whose achievements are likely to remain unequalled, combining as they did an optimum of elemental power with a maximum of spiritual intensity.

In matters exoterical, to be sure, the Konzerthaus Quartet offered a great deal that was good, even Viennese. The intonation, for one thing, was not only, for the greatest part, immaculate, but also subtly flexible. There was, in fact, the loving care for *finesse* of tone and texture, the ear for balance and for the wealth of shadings between *mezzo forte* and *pianissimo*. Of a few isolated stretches one could even say that they were outstanding, at least in one of the parts: the cellist's countermelody to the 2nd violin's 'second subject in the recapitulation of the Schubert's first movement; his opening theme in the slow movement (though for some stupid reason he disunited the consequent's cadential phrase whose analogue in the antecedent he had shaped so sensitively); the complete avoidance of a *crescendo* at the beginning of the scherzo's main section; or, in the finale, the continuation of the theme and particularly the 2nd violin in the second subject.

It was, however, the phrasing of the *tarantella* theme itself that was unfortunately typical of the Konzerthaus Quartet's approach to formal problems, of its recession from the music's living organism; whence our criticism of this part of the performance will serve as *pars pro toto*. Mystified by the dynamics of the theme, the players spelt them out rather than read them. They started as *forte* as possible as soon as possible, so that the first upbeat received a terrific and lengthy push; indeed, in order to have time for their spelling-along, they allowed themselves the grotesque agogical feats, inserting a lavish pause after the *fz* (which itself was absurdly exaggerated), and prolonging the subsequent upbeat in an attempt to "play" its *piano* to the full. In effect, of course, the upbeat was thus just as strongly accented as the *fz*, and the phrase was torn into two pieces which contradicted each other. Apparently it never occurred to these musicians that the *fz* was intended (a) to establish the *first* accent of the phrase, and (b) to disburden the ensuing motif.

According to Richard Capell, Jorg Demus played the Beethoven "with a wise head on young shoulders". To your (admittedly young) critic, this excellent pianist seemed, on the contrary, so much of a youngster that he did not even appear to be aware yet that he was too young for the Sonata. "So well-poised and satisfying a statement of the theme of the variations", continues Mr. Capell, "is no common experience". Poise or no, the theme was not played with due regard to the variations, with the result that,

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at the beginning, it *already* contained too much, and, at the end, *still* too much: the movement never started and never finished. (Beethoven wants "*innigste*", not *ausdrücklichste Empfindung*.)

H. K.

OXFORD HARMONIC SOCIETY

BRUCKNER'S E MINOR MASS

Town Hall, 25th February

THE Oxford Harmonic Society has, for some time now, been building up an enviable reputation for presenting neglected works of high intrinsic value; last year, for instance, the Society gave the first complete performance since 1782 of Arne's *Judith*; this year, it has gone a good deal better in giving what appeared to be the first performance in England, with the composer's scoring, of Bruckner's E minor Mass of 1866. Box-office considerations excepted, the venture was markedly successful. Whatever may be said for Oxford's insatiable thirst for knowledge and artistic experience in other fields, musically it is distressingly conservative, as is shown by quantitative comparison of the attendance at the performance under review and that at a more recent concert which included a Glazunov symphony in its programme, with that at a very much stereotyped Beethoven programme which had been given by the London Philharmonic Orchestra in the same hall a few days before. (It may be mentioned in passing that, hideous in appearance as its interior is, the Oxford Town Hall has unusually good acoustic qualities.)

Technically, the performance of the Bruckner Mass was distinguished, marred only by one serious blemish: the horns "fluffed" their first entry in the Kyrie, but then, wisely, kept silent until their second. The rich, refulgent tone of the Kalmor Orchestra's brass players make them a group to be watched in the future; the woodwind are not in quite the same class, but gave, on this occasion, a highly creditable account of themselves. The voices, which lacked colour and "body" in certain departments, blended remarkably well; their attack, generally, was beyond reproach, and their articulation exemplary. The (at times) difficult problem of balance was satisfactorily solved. Thewlis' interpretation was penetrating and thorough, wherefore it is all the more to be regretted that certain members of the audience appeared to have misunderstood the Mass, and dismissed it as just another nineteenth-century sacred work, not so very much better than those of Barnby and Stainer.

A. F. L.-T.

PHILHARMONIA CONCERT SOCIETY

KINGSWAY HALL, 26TH FEBRUARY

It would be a good rule if, when artists are prevented from appearing, the piece substituted should be by the same composer as the piece jettisoned, that is, if the piece be changed at all. Denis Matthews was to have played the *Kreutzer* with Arthur Grumiaux; his place (and also as accompanist to Elisabeth Schwarzkopf in ten Brahms folk-songs) was taken by Jorg Demus in K.454. Mr. Demus is an extremely accomplished pianist with a delicate touch, but capable (as he showed in the Brahms horn Trio) of distinguished sonorities. He would have been a delight in the second movement of the *Kreutzer*, for which the Mozart B flat is hardly an apt substitute; the Sonata in A (K.526) would have been nearer the mark; but why go to Mozart at all, when Beethoven has been billed? For the rest I will only say that the singer's renderings were impeccable, though (shall I be permitted to *live*?) the note of coy winsome sentiment that seems to have come into the treatment of the German *Lied*—not before Schumann—only succeeds in irritating me, and that Brahms's Op. 40 by familiarity, and despite Dennis Brain, each time I hear it, seems nearer to the sentiment of Tchaikovsky than the legendary Brahms of "the Three Bs" fame; while the professorial jocosity of its scherzo makes me want to leave my seat. Arthur Grumiaux is a competent violinist, but I am old-fashioned and like the instrument to *sing* more.

E. H. W. M.

KINGSWAY HALL, 5TH MARCH

Joueurs de Flute (Roussel), *Aubade* (Lipatti), Piano Sonata, Op. 26 (Barber),
Contrasts (Bartók)

SOMETHING is going wrong with these programmes of Twentieth Century Music: either it isn't really twentieth century, or it isn't altogether music. Play Roussel, by all means, although or because he is not "likely ever to [become] a popular composer" (Mellers), but why in that case play these flute pieces which in view of their harmonic insincerity are not even likely to become popular with the connoisseurs? One should not *solely* depend on snobs. As far as I can hear, the only reason why "*Krishna*", "the outstanding piece of the set" (Mosco Carner), is based on the Indian scale a-b-b-c#-d#-e-f-g#-a is that with its 4 tritones, 4 major sevenths and 2 augmented seconds it gives the composer an opportunity to indulge in his melodic and harmonic mannerisms. The result is inartistic vagueness—as distinct from truly artistic ambiguity whose meaning must be all the clearer for being double. The last movement, "*Mr. de la Péjaundie*", is one of modern music's many unnecessary jokes—as is, on a much higher level of formal achievement, the last movement of the Bartók. The programme note was in fact mistaken when it thought that "because of its slighter calibre [the work] serves as a good introduction to the Hungarian master's ripe art": one approaches a serious composer's lighter works through his weighty ones; if one can't do that, one had better leave him alone. The world *première* of the Lipatti (fl., ob., cl., bn.) disclosed embarrassing Roumanian Boulangerie; whereas the Barber, only recently first—but since then at least twice—performed in this country, is one of the most scandalous, harmful, and depressingly unconscious swindles that have ever been perpetrated by a respected composer. The sonata machinations of the first movement and the outrage of what poses as a fugal finale are surpassed only by the pretext of a harmonic style which, though in these outer movements it may deceive those who have lost all standards of evaluation and haven't found any new ones instead, shows up in the scherzo blatantly for what it is—where you only have to remove a few highly accidental accidentals in order to convict the accused without further questioning; it is his very innocence which makes his artistic guilt so clear and severe. There is one original idea, *i.e.* the chorale-like trio with scherzo interjections, and that is executed in the most banal fashion.

Thus, in spite of the exceptionally brilliant performances by Gareth Morris, Sidney Sutcliffe, Frederick Thurston, Cecil James, Max Salpeter, and the pianist Bela Siki, a 26-year-old Hungarian who studied with Lipatti and has not previously been heard in London, I found myself too exhausted and exasperated to stay for the works to which I had been looking forward: Debussy's flute-violoncello-harp Sonata and the Ravel Septet.

H. K.

LONDON CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CENTRE

FRANK MARTIN-PRIAULX RAINIER-MÁTYÁS SEIBER

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA, C. PAUL SACHER

Concert Hall, Broadcasting House, 27th March

THE Rainier and Seiber have both been publicly performed in this country, the Martin once broadcast previously on the Third programme. Starting in order of relative weakness, the Martin song-cycle *Die Weise von Liebe und Tod des Cornets Christoph Rilke* was exceptionally dull. A turgid orchestral texture which seems to have learned nothing from such recent chamber-orchestral specialists as Schönberg and Britten—not to speak of Strauss and Mahler—a quite unmemorable vocal line (soloist: Elsa Cavelti) quite out of touch with the very personal cadences of Rainer Maria Rilke's exotic poetry, and a harmonic idiom both exhausting and exhausted, not so much because it is barrenly and basically conservative—a "dead" language in fact—but because it has never begun to live. Miss Rainier, on the other hand, appears to be determined to kill all signs of musical life in herself. She goes about this unhappy task with extraordinary persistence and in her *Sinfonia da Camera* for string orchestra manages to suppress even more of her

musical self than in her earlier (?) string Quartet. Someone should rid her of her obsession to become lifelessly self-identified with Stravinsky, since all the signs show that such imitation will end in an unmusical death. The *Sinfonia*, despite its contrived rhythmic ingenuity, remains stationary and on the few occasions when it seems likely to move (in more than one sense of the word: the opening of the slow movement for instance), the momentum is immediately diverted into less fruitful channels. The harmony—outwardly so opposed to Martin's—comes nearer to the Swiss composer's than might be suspected, since Miss Rainier's emasculated, well-nigh fossilized Stravinskianisms are as conservative in their way as Martin's lush and fundamentally irresponsible neo-Wagnerianisms. That her score (to quote the programme notes) "does not contain *crescendi*, *diminuendi* and *rallentandi*" is characteristic but discouragingly symptomatic. Which leaves Mátyás Seiber's *Fantasia Concertante* for solo violin and string orchestra (soloist: Max Rostal) an easy winner. No doubt the fact that the work "employs the twelve-tone technique" accounts for its somewhat hostile reception. Mr. Dyneley Hussey in *The Listener* (5th April) found the piece "downright unintelligible" and *The Times* (28th March) was provoked to instruct us that "by now it should be becoming clear that dodecaphony is in the nature of a private language and therefore not a good medium of communication. Mr. Seiber succeeds now and then in being eloquent in spite of himself". Moreover: "It is one of the rules of this system that themes must not sound like memorable bits of melody—although mathematical probability would allow a few permutations of tones that might sound coherent—for then the tones would be resuming their old functional relationships and that is against the rules of atonalism. Mr. Max Rostal played it as though he believed in every note of it". Now no one objects to *The Times* having its not-so-memorable bit of fun at Schönberg-Seiber's expense, but comedy always falls flat when it departs too far from reality. Believe me or not, and notwithstanding Mr. Hussey, the Seiber was by far the most intelligible of the evening's music, it was as eloquent as good music always is of its own excellence—no more and no less—it possessed real melodic distinction, was consummately played by Mr. Rostal and effectively broke all those rules which *The Times* seems to imagine were the composer's primary concern. Seiber's extremely free use of his basic series, the constant recurrence of a five-note melodic figure, the undeniable folk-nature of much of the thematic material should have taught *The Times* that it was tilting its lance at non-existent windmills. "Scratch a twelve-toner and you'll find a set of rules" is the most enduring of critical fantasies about the dodecaphonic system, a fantasy which is gaily unaware that logic demands the formulation of a formula both as a point of arrival and a point of departure. Has not Schönberg himself written that his pupils have "all had to find their way alone, for themselves . . . everyone has his own manner of obeying rules derived from the treatment of twelve tones"? No, *The Times*, busily discovering logarithm tables where there weren't any, overlooked the music and the striking moral which Seiber's piece presented in comparison with Rainier's and Martin's. For Seiber, too, has his conservative side—a kind of rhapsodic "nationalism" to which we are accustomed in Bartók. But whereas the respective impacts of Rainier and Martin on their inherited or appropriated traditions turn out to be no more than sterile and non-committal collisions, the union of Seiber's instinctive, almost "local" musical personality with the wider implications of the widest possible and most un-local of systems of composition results in a genuinely living musical language and a vital harmonic idiom. For those with ears to hear the Seiber was fresh evidence not only of the twelve-tone system's clarifying function, but also of its essential fertility; and fertility does not exist where there is no freedom.

GIESEKING

Kingsway Hall, 2nd April

BEST played in Giesecking's recital was the Beethoven A♭ Sonata, Op. 110: worst, the Bach C minor *Partita*. Not that Giesecking's prodigious technique ever faltered, but now and again—as in the Bach's *Courante*—the technique obscured the musical insight

and resulted in a flood of brilliantly executed notes but little else. Generally *tempi* in the Bach were on the fast side and Giesecking was inclined to hurry on even from an already hasty start, an approach at odds with the demands of Bach's phrasing which, above all, requires room enough for its melodic figures to shape themselves and make themselves *felt*. Nevertheless, Giesecking's phrasing in the *Sarabande* was exceptionally beautiful and cunningly suggested three-part writing, not two. The absence of an unmusical *ritardando* and grandiose *crescendo* in the concluding *Capriccio* deserves a sentence of praise to itself: such restraint is rarely met.

Beethoven's late piano sonatas I find almost as difficult to understand as the late quartets, but Giesecking made Op. 110 clearer for me than any other pianist I have heard. Particularly the structure of the enigmatic finale, and of the fugue theme itself. Here Giesecking achieved an enormous tension by a slight holding back in *tempo* and a rather undefined *pianissimo*, both immensely suggestive of the latent, to-be-developed powers of the fugue itself. It was a pity he adopted this same device for the resumption of the fugue after the *adagio's* recurrence, which was regressive in so far as it implied a fresh start rather than progress towards the Sonata's extraordinary *coda*. Beethoven still manages to be more modern than most of the moderns. D. M.

PHILHARMONIA CONCERTS

22nd February: 9th March: 9th April

THE first of these—Weber's *Freischütz* overture, Bruckner VII and the "Emperor" Concerto with Fischer—never coalesced into a "programme" but certainly did exhibit the Bruckner Symphony in proper perspective. While it is nonsense to claim that only those who are familiar with Upper Austria can understand Bruckner, it has long been true, and apparently still is, that British orchestras cannot really play these symphonies. From the technical standpoint Furtwängler achieved a fair measure of success with the Philharmonia, apart from an overdose of careless brass work, but, when all had been spent, one knew at last that the orchestral wheels had not been properly oiled. When our orchestras play Bruckner we are conscious of his pauses, so much so that Tovey thought it worth while to poke fun at something he insufficiently understood—a presumption which, in others, he would have castigated as "perky". These pauses—not for a reply, as Tovey maintained—are an integral part of the music: the Vienna Philharmonic can demonstrate this at any time, British orchestras never. Furtwängler and Fischer played the Beethoven as though they had both long plumbed its secrets, which, no doubt, is true but is not what the audience had paid for. *Freischütz* showed us where a good native orchestra, playing well under a first-class conductor, falls short of what we have a right to expect.

It is a melancholy but indisputable fact that in this country no one under thirty has yet been offered an opportunity of coming to terms with the mature works of Wagner: for one cannot take seriously the occasional concert performances of overtures and other incidental pieces nor Covent Garden's annual half-baked approach to *The Ring*. Those, at least, who were privileged to be present at the concert performance of the first act of *Die Walküre* on 9th March will know this to be true; they and others can, if they wish, improve the shining hour by visiting Bayreuth in July or August. It is true that this act, like the first of *Siegfried*, is not particularly dramatic and need not suffer unduly from being transferred to the concert platform, but one hardly expected its great moments to be enhanced as they were. Hilde Konetzni (Sieglinde), Ludwig Suthaus (Siegmund) and Josef Greindl (Hunding) combined with Furtwängler and the Philharmonia orchestra to present one of the outstanding events of the season. The first half of the concert consisted of the *Flying Dutchman* overture and the "Prelude and Good Friday Music" from *Parsifal*.

The impression that remains from Kletzki's concert on 9th April is of his precise and successful technique for coping with the acoustic peculiarities of the Albert Hall; apart from Bruno Walter, I know of no other conductor who has dealt with this problem so

satisfactorily. The fundamental factor was, of course, the range of dynamics employed—and this was not wide: true *pianissimo* to a bare *mezzoforte*, and only rarely that. Kletzki's meticulous sense of proportion, his fine technique and genuine musical enthusiasm secured from the Philharmonia orchestra the best sustained playing of real quality that I have yet heard from a post-war British *ensemble*. The excerpts from Strauss' *Dafne* and *Capriccio*, with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, maintained that limp continuity of melodic line so characteristic of Strauss at his lyrical best—as in the closing pages of *Don Quixote*—and the select, if tiny audience was captivated. We have all been informed from a great height that Kletzki's interpretation of the Handel-Harty *Water Music* was extravagantly romanticized, but readers are not bound to credit even the contributors to MR with omniscience, let alone extra-mural pundits. The fact remains that the result was delightfully musical, a tribute which cannot be extended to Mahler's trashy fourth Symphony which, however, sounded better than usual for being kept on a tight rein.

G. N. S.

Kingsway Hall, 16th April

STRAUSS—HINDEMITH—ROUSSEL—BRITTEN

Who was the most "original" composer of this twentieth-century concert? If we confined ourselves to originality of *ideas* alone, then Richard Strauss might be the most promising candidate for the prize. It seems the older he grew, the livelier became his intellect. What a brilliant notion, for instance, to preface his conversational opera *Capriccio* with a prelude for string sextet. Unfortunately, however, Strauss' style failed to keep pace with his quick mind, and the music turns out to be not half so fascinating as the scheme itself; mainly, of course, because the prelude is not genuine chamber music. Its more strenuous middle section plainly demands orchestral treatment or at least a full string band. Much the same sort of impression—verbal promises musically unfulfilled—resulted from Wilma Lipp's not completely successful performance of Zerbinetta's *aria* from *Ariadne auf Naxos*, a piece which had the bad luck to be preceded by Britten's *Serenade*: a juxtaposition not too kind to Strauss. Once again *Ariadne*—a sort of latter-day *Zauberflöte*—was such a marvellous *idea*; once again the music just misses being anything but the old Strauss we have all experienced before. No doubt it is unfair to blame a composer for being himself, but so often the gap between Strauss' aesthetic ambitions and his concrete achievements is too wide to be ignored. On the other hand his *Metamorphosen* (perhaps rather over-emphatically conducted by Mr. Del Mar) possesses a momentum which both the pieces from *Capriccio* and *Ariadne* lack. A composer's funeral oration written by himself may safely look backwards, and in this noble peroration there is certainly no conflict between style and idea. With Hindemith's horn Concerto (soloist: Dennis Brain) and Roussel's *Petite Suite* we moved into more truly twentieth-century circles. The Hindemith greatly improves on further acquaintance, especially its first two movements; but the finale, presenting as it does two variations on two contrasted themes, an expansive *coda*, and, thrown in for good measure, an accompanied horn *cadenza* which "declaims" the words of a poem written by Hindemith himself, remains something of a formal puzzle the solution to which I have not yet discovered. What is remarkable throughout is the texture, as lucid as it ever may be. Remarkable also in its way is Hindemith's rhythmic monotony—perhaps a Regerian inheritance he could have done without. Indeed Hindemith can be as tiresomely devoted to triple measure as the otherwise dissimilar Delius. The Roussel shares some stylistic points with the Hindemith but does not suffer the latter's deficiencies of rhythm. In fact the rhythm is the cunningest aspect of Roussel's work—particularly the very smartly contrived and disguised jazz inflections. Musically though it is minor stuff and not at all comparable with the same composer's major *Suite en Fa*. Which leaves room for but a bare mention of Britten's *Serenade* for tenor, horn and strings sung with superb accomplishment by Peter Pears, expertly aided by Dennis Brain. The deepest setting of all—that of Keats' *Sonnet*—went deeper into the twentieth century than all the rest of the evening's music; not only the twentieth century, it should be added, but far beyond.

D. M.

COVENT GARDEN

The Pilgrim's Progress: 26th April

ORATORIO IN FANCY DRESS

CERTAINLY this is no opera. Though we cannot truthfully claim to have been inveigled into the opera house under false pretences, for the entertainment was described as a "Morality". Nor was it entertaining: but no one familiar with Bunyan's cast of mind and Vaughan Williams' previous output of sacred music could reasonably have expected to be entertained. The solid merit of Bunyan's book will always be affirmed by the Faithful, but I doubt whether one of their number could be found who would fancy its chances of success on the operatic, or any other stage.

The music cuts no new paths: the composer has reminisced over his music scrap-books of the past 50 years and in general reiterated the same basic sound patterns that are to be found in, for example, *Job* and the last three symphonies. The result is too long drawn out. It sprawls, lacks movement and quickly stagnates. Out of place in the National opera house, this *Pilgrim's Progress*, substantially cut, could make an impressive pageant in a cathedral close.

Leonard Hancock showed himself to be a conductor of promise. The intonation and ensemble of the orchestra, without approaching the highest continental calibre, maintained a steady accuracy which we know not to take for granted. The scenery, which must have been new, managed to give the impression, by means of multiple creases, that it had been stored for at least a decade; while the lighting did no credit to Hal Burton, whose particular responsibility it was, nor to Nevill Coghill who, as producer, presumably cast at least one supervisory eye in this direction.

The singing was for the most part accurate, but undistinguished and, apart from Inia te Wiata (Bunyan), Norman Walker (Evangelist) and Michael Langdon (Apollyon), conspicuously lacking in power. Arnold Matters had a thankless task as Pilgrim.

G. N. S.

BALLET

Daphnis and Chloe

COVENT GARDEN, 5TH APRIL

RAVEL's score for *Daphnis and Chloe* is one of those rare examples of a composition so self-contained that it makes it difficult for a choreographer to create something significant in alliance with the music. (The consensus of expert opinion on the original production in 1912 suggests that Fokine made only a partial success with his choreography.) When Fokine submitted a scenario on this subject to the ballet director at Saint Petersburg in 1904 it was found unacceptable—probably not because of its intrinsic interest, but on account of the accompanying memorandum he had written. That memorandum embodied his theories on the necessary rules for the revitalizing of ballet and those rules were the basis upon which most of the achievement of the Diaghilev ballet was erected; in essence they required that a fresh dance style should be devised for each new ballet subject and—ideally—new music should be composed as well as new *décor* designed for the ballet. Even though new music was not always commissioned, a very high proportion of new ballets, about 60 per cent, did have new scores; as well as those two surviving masterworks of that period, *Petrouchka* and *Firebird*, seven other ballets to new music were given in the London seasons before the 1914 war: one of these was *Daphnis and Chloe*.

In a period in which commissioned music for a ballet is an exception rather than the common rule, it gives a minor anticipatory pleasure to hear of a projected ballet being made to ballet-music even when that music has been used previously. Frederick Ashton's Festival work is based on the same scenario, derived from Longus, that Fokine had used 40 years ago; sets and costumes are provided by John Craxton, a painter acquainted with modern Greece, and the score is Ravel's—including the chorus, which was not used in the first production.

The new version, in its styles of decoration and dance-idiom, sets the action in Hellenic surroundings closer to to-day than to the time of Longus; the greater part of the costumes are a thin stylizing of modern dress and the female dancers use the *pointe* idiom (basic traditional Ballet), while the male dancing uses a good deal of steps and patterns derived from Balkan and Greek folk dance. The story is clearly told and most of the solo dances are of interesting composition; the group dances reflect many of the *ensemble* patterns to be seen in other Ashton ballets. The general effect is of a competent job of dance-craftsmanship with too few highlights in the action. The highlights are, the challenge dance between Daphnis and Dorkon, Chloe's dance as a captive, the dance of the pirate chief, and the first half of the celebration dance which forms the finale when the lovers have been re-united. The choreography is formed of many distinct incidents with too few interesting "bridge passages" linking them; the music sets a very stiff challenge to the choreographer and would seem to require a dance *continuum* to match (with, of course, suitable contrapuntal deviations) the organically continuous growth of the music.

The shortcomings of the scenario are: the inadequate use made of the characters Lykanion and Dorkon, the lack of dramatic strength in the character of Daphnis, and the extreme length of the celebratory finale—considering the small degree of success that attended the first ballet of this title, it is probable that a freshly worked-out scenario is needed for any future attempts. Longus' story tells a simple romantic tale heightened by one melodramatic incident, its *dénouement* depends on the acceptance of a religious myth. Nowhere in this version does any soloist or group suggest that the dark gods of Ancient Greece were believable.

A. V. C.

Book Reviews

The Racial Thinking of Richard Wagner. By Leon Stein. Pp. xiv + 252. (Philosophical Library, New York.) 1950. \$4.75.

Never trust a writer on Wagner who does not evince a deep understanding of and sympathy with Nietzsche before and after his denial of the master. For both as a friend and as a foe Nietzsche showed the profoundest-ever insight, not so much into the music of Wagner, as into the composer's psychology and theories which are, after all, Dr. Stein's concern. The latter condescendingly grants (p. 209) that "... one must accept the philosopher's later criticisms of Wagner, with numerous reservations, rejecting some altogether" ("*many* musical, *no* philosophical reservations, and *no* rejections at all" would come nearer the truth), yet he finds (p. 223) Nietzsche's description of the *Meistersinger* prelude as "rough and coarse . . . arbitrarily barbaric and ceremonious" to be "expressed in characteristic paradoxes". A man who finds the expression "barbaric and ceremonious" paradoxical can have insight neither into Nietzsche, nor Wagner, nor the Germans, nor modern psychology. It is a small point in a long and argumentative book, but remarks like this—and there are plenty of them—are as so many levers with which to lift off the very urbane, very erudite, very persuasive surface of Dr. Stein's writing and to expose the tangled confusion of his argument. Throughout the book there is confusion of three kinds: (a) repetitiveness, (b) hasty superficiality, (c) a tendency which I believe to be unconscious, but which Wagner, were he alive, would certainly call a "Jüdische Täuschung", to bring up any possible modifications of his own arguments some chapters later and in a slightly changed context. Here are a few examples of all three:

(a) In spite of Dr. Stein's very good-looking tables of contents, such chapters as "Volk, Kultur, Language and Music", "The Antisemitism of Wagner", "Judaism in Music" in the first part, and "Race Concepts", "Some Wagnerian Fallacies", "Racial Expression in Wagner's Music" in the third part not only cover the same ground, but verbosely and in a style that cannot but be compared to Wagner's own prose, say the same things over and over again. It is true that in "A Critical Evaluation" (part three) Dr.

Stein's comments on his subject matter stand out more than before, but a unified and progressive plan of writing would have been preferable. I, for one, would remember much more about "Wagner contra Mendelssohn" if all the information had been confined to one chapter.

(b) There is hardly a quotation in German that has not its minor defects of spelling, and sometimes declension.—German philosophy in its influence on Wagner and the Germans is treated at some length but without much penetration. The pages on Schopenhauer (31–35) contain some excerpts from Wagner's letters and then treat exclusively of Schopenhauer's influence on Wagner's antisemitism, admittedly Dr. Stein's main concern, but degrading one of the noblest figures of Western philosophy into a foil for Wagner's follies.¹ But equally, Wagner is treated as a foil for the crimes of German nationalists and Nazis, and gets, in spite of some of Dr. Stein's half-hearted attempts at drawing the line, not only the blame he deserves but the blame for a future that exaggerated the intra-psychologically necessary aberrations of a psychopath of genius into a policy of crude action. Dr. Stein "has determined to avoid [psychoanalytical] classifications". In view of the "still fluid nature of psychoanalytical science" he has "thought it best simply to present the factual aspects of Wagner's antisemitism, and let those who feel qualified derive the conclusions which seem to be indicated by that factual evidence".—This would be all very well were the present book merely a selection of documents. But it is not, and in his reasoning Dr. Stein time and again ventures into some kind of pre-analytical thinking (as about Wagner's attitude towards Mendelssohn) which makes me wish that this study had been undertaken by a trained analyst.

(c) Although Wagner's concept of "Race" is attacked (and rightly so) for fifteen chapters, he is never given the credit of having lived before the age of scientific genetics. When Wagner said "the German race" he meant "the German nation and their culture", and when he discriminated between "German and Jewish blood" he obviously was not referring to biological blood types but used the word "blood" metaphorically. It is therefore a belatedly unfair attempt at meting out justice when Dr. Stein, having criticized the racial theories of the Nazis, suddenly says in chapter 16: "*Using the word in Wagner's sense*" (my italics), there is no such genetic-cultural unit as a race.

There are certainly some points in Dr. Stein's favour. The subject is, as he claims, topical, and has been unduly neglected; he has a thorough knowledge of sources and bibliography; he quotes well and is fond of footnotes; and he has moments of real intellectual quality. The excellent sentence "The emotions produced by the action of laws elucidated by aesthetics and philosophy, but not the elucidation of aesthetic or philosophic concepts, are among the valid objectives of music expression" (p. 221) comes from a chapter on "Racial expression in Wagner's music" which after a good start trails off into pseudo-aesthetical platitudes. Still, pages 218–222 are a very valuable contribution to the problem of how much "fascism" can be detected in Wagner's music as such; a problem that still vexes many a listener.² It is starting from considerations such as this, and from an analytical study of the man, that a genuine Wagner literature should now begin to outgrow the numerous publications on both sides of the Wagnerian fence by people who have an axe to grind.

P. H.

To Soothe a Savage Breast. By Reginald Nettel. Pp. 236. (Evans Bros.) 1950. 12s. 6d.

But who am I to review William Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson, Thomas Morley, Izaak Walton, Robert Burton, John Milton, John Bunyan, Samuel Pepys, John Dryden, Roger North, Joseph Addison, Daniel Defoe, Tobias Smollett, Oliver Goldsmith, Jane Austen, Sir Walter Scott, Charles Lamb, Charles Dickens, Thomas Carlyle, Charles Darwin, Samuel Butler, Thomas Hardy, or the yet more distinguished authors of the Bible?

¹ The reader will find a short and very readable exposition of Wagner's relationship to Schopenhauer in Nietzsche's *Der Fall Wagner*, chapter 4.

² Cf. Beverley Nichols' quarrel with Sir Austen Chamberlain, told in the former's *All I could never be*, pp. 199, 200 (Jonathan Cape).

A book the bulk of which is from these and like pens needs no praise of mine; and the selections are chosen unevenly, perhaps, but with that waywardness and individuality which make a good anthology.

Interspersed there are also forty pages by Mr. Nettel. These do nothing to improve his reputation as a clever writer with an easy, an all too easy style, a vivid but inaccurate mind, and a genuine but unreliable gift for generalization. In less outstanding company, such defects would be considerably less conspicuous, and Mr. Nettel may be granted the virtues, almost exactly, of an excellent conversationalist; for in conversation it does not much matter if you make wild remarks provided you periodically hit an interesting and unexpected nail well and truly on the head, and meanwhile never bore. In print it somehow doesn't do so well, if only because every error perpetrated will be reiterated until it becomes almost impossible to catch up with.

P. 14: "The players [of Stuart viol music] did not cultivate vibrato": but why, then, do contemporary authorities like Playford and Simpson give careful instructions for performing it? "or other means of affecting throbbing emotionalism": but Mace's "Divine Raptures" in playing viol music do not sound unemotional, any more than Corelli can have been unemotional when Raguenet described him as "hurried away by his passions" so that "he doth not look like the same man". Mace, in fact, tells us that "in musick, may any Humour, Conceit or Passion (never so various) be Exprest". The whole picture drawn by Mr. Nettel of "a pure impersonal beauty" is romanticized and unreal. It is true and important that "striving for personal supremacy would have been regarded as marring the consort"—or a Beethoven quartet; or a modern orchestral score with the partial exception of deliberately virtuoso concerto parts. But I am not sure whether beauty is ever impersonal and I am quite certain that music is never unemotional. Playing Stuart consorts unemotionally would be an even quicker way of killing them than playing them in the modern idiom; playing them properly is a major undertaking for which an already over-long review is no place to give instructions. . . .

P. 23: "George Herbert's fondness for the viols—for the pure impersonal beauty of music in which the player lost himself—could not forever satisfy a composer [William Lawes] who strove to bend fine music to the will of a brilliant court accustomed to elaborate masques and admiration of individual merit in performers. Lawes composed in the English tradition of imaginative fancies, and was quite as experimental as the madrigalists, but his genius led him towards the violin and away from the viols." Not him! His experiments, his modernisms, were carried much farther in his great consorts for viols, on which his contemporary reputation rested, and which are anything but "pure" and "impersonal", abounding as they do in harmonic bombshells, consecutive seconds and sevenths (not to mention fifths and even octaves) fit to wear out any examiner's blue pencil. And that was not by any means the end of the viols' innings, with most of Jenkins and all of Locke to come, and Purcell's fantasies to close the score. Thereafter, the solo gamba flourished for another century, and did not strike J. S. Bach as an unemotional instrument.

These errors are typical of a large assortment. A writer so eminently readable and imaginative as Mr. Nettel has an invaluable service to perform in opening windows, in revealing new and fascinating vistas, to readers less informed and awakened than himself. His vision has scope and interest enough; but until he brings it more sharply into focus, he will mislead his readers in the very act of enlarging their tastes and outlook. The better the writer, the greater his responsibility.

R. D.

Per il bicentenario della nascita di Domenico Cimarosa. Pp. 184. (Aversa: a cura del Comitato Nazionale per le celebrazioni.) 1949.

On the occasion of the centenary of the death of Cimarosa, in 1901, the town of Aversa, where he was born, published a large commemorative volume, full of interesting material about all sorts of things, but including remarkably little that had any connection at all with Cimarosa. In 1949, two hundred years after the composer's birth, Aversa has done, from the musical point of view, much better. This new volume is much smaller than the

earlier one, but contains a great deal more valuable matter. Pride of place must be given to Franco Schlitzer's "Annali delle opere di Cimarosa" (76 pages), which, as the author acknowledges, owe a great deal to Dr. Ulderico Rolandi's example and to his library and marvellous collection of *libretti*. Schlitzer has also examined the most important collections of manuscripts in Naples and lists in chronological order Cimarosa's entire output, with an invaluable commentary that corrects a good many mistaken ideas. He finds, for example, that the work hitherto known as *La bella greca* is really identical with *I matrimoni impensati*, the MS at Naples having lost its title-page and having been re-titled, as has happened in similar cases elsewhere, by a librarian. And, although Schlitzer does not discuss the point, he provides the solution of a problem indicated in Loewenberg's *Annals of Opera*—whether *Artemisia*, Cimarosa's last work, produced at Venice in 1801, was an original work, or a revision of his *Artemisia, Regina di Caria* of 1797. From the lists of characters it is clear that they were entirely separate works (*Artemisia* is the only character they have in common) and from the description of the score of the *Artemisia* of 1801 it is clear that Cimarosa never finished it, and that it was prepared for performance, with additions, by another hand.

It is curious that no *libretto* of the first performance of *Il matrimonio segreto*, at Vienna in 1792, is known to have survived. Even the organizers of the Vienna Cimarosa Exhibition of 1901 were unable to find one, and yet it existed, being advertised in the surviving play-bills. It would seem that the collection of *libretti* has not received the same attention in Central Europe as it has in Italy.

An *aria* published by Parisotti, "Il bel nume che adoro", from *Pigmalione*, is shown to be really by G. B. Cimarosa, whose *Pigmalione* was performed at Venice in 1788, the error being taken over by Parisotti from a collection entitled "Lira partenopea" published by Cottrau at Naples. Possibly some of Parisotti's other misattributions derived from the same source. But Schlitzer makes a mistake when he declares that the five *Duettini per Camera* published in London in 1805 were by Cimarosa as well. He cannot have seen the title-page, which clearly indicates the respective contributions of Cimarosa and Cimarador: "Five Duettini per camera, for two soprano voices, composed by Domenico Cimarosa. The pianoforte accompaniment by J. B. Cimarador." These works were published by "Monzani and Cimarador", so there is hardly any possibility of a mistake. (Incidentally, this supplies the identification of that "Cungdor, Cundon or Cinador" who, according to *Grove* and various contemporary references, was the partner of Theobald Monzani at this time.)

Another valuable contribution (in French) is that by R. Aloys Mooser, the Swiss scholar, on Cimarosa's visit to Russia. Here it is made quite clear for the first time that the composer went to St. Petersburg in 1787, and not only in 1789, as often stated—indeed, as stated in the "Vita di Cimarosa" by M. Roberto Vitale in this very volume. It is a pity that the anonymous editor should not have adjusted this and let his contributors speak with one voice. Felice de Filippis' chapter on the Neapolitan theatres, admittedly taken mostly from Croce, also includes some out-of-date information. For nearly fifty years now it has been known that the first Neapolitan *opera buffa* was not *Patrò Calienno de la Costa* in 1709.

Dr. Rolandi himself writes on Cimarosa's librettists—a typical essay, full of curious information. S. A. Luciani has two short contributions, one on the *Intermezzi*, with some thoughtful comments on the development of this *genre*, side-by-side with the *opera buffa*, and the other on Stendhal and Cimarosa. In Stendhal's exaggerated tributes—for example, that on two duets in *Il matrimonio segreto*: "Ces chants sont les plus beaux qu'il ait été donné à l'âme humaine de concevoir"—we recognize the voice of the eternal ecstatic *liletante*, which is always the same, whether heard in *La vie d'Henry Brulard*, in "Bombet's" *Vies de Haydn, Mozart et Metastase*, or in the columns of our own contemporary left-wing highbrow weekly.

On Stendhal's tomb one reads his own epitaph: "Errico Beyle—Milanese—Visse scrisse amò." On his manuscript he had added: "Quest'anima—adorava—Cimarosa Mozart Shakespeare."

F. W.

Ralph Vaughan Williams. By Hubert Foss. Pp. 219. (Harrap.) 1950. 12s. 6d.

It is most fitting that a composer of the seniority and eminence of Vaughan Williams should be the subject of a full length study. His life and works show a fascinating blend of independence and love of tradition: but the musical traditions that he has chosen to follow are not, on the whole, those on which he was brought up, and he could not have given his allegiance to them without a strongly independent outlook. He still remains a strangely unpredictable figure; many of his works, including the last three symphonies, have come as complete surprises, yet with all his versatility and wide emotional range, the essentials of his musical personality have remained unchanged, and he has never, like some modern composers, seemed to regard the exploration of new paths and the solution of new problems as the sole aims of musical composition.

In view of Vaughan Williams' thoroughly unpontifical approach to his art, it is suitable that Mr. Foss' book should be of an informal character; he writes with enthusiasm, though not without discrimination, and rightly devotes considerable space to a general survey of the musical and social background against which Vaughan Williams grew up. The discussion of folk-song and its influence is sane and balanced, avoiding both snobbery and excess of devotion; we are very rightly reminded that the influence of the Tudor composers contributed more than that of folk-song to the rhythmic freedom and flexibility of Vaughan Williams' music. The descriptions of some of the less familiar early works, such as the *House of Life*, are of great interest. When writing about the later works Mr. Foss is always vigorous and stimulating, with some unexpected personal idiosyncrasies; towards the sixth Symphony, for instance, he is surprisingly cautious. But he is over-apt to rely on the use of analogies from literature and the other arts which, however picturesque, are of too vague a character to contribute much towards an intimate knowledge of the music. Technical analysis of a more detailed kind could have been applied to such individual and independent works of art without dryness, or without departing from the pleasantly informal style of the book.

There remain for discussion Vaughan Williams' own contributions. One of these is a thoughtful and provocative paper, "Who wants the English composer?" which was written for the magazine of the Royal College of Music in 1912. The other is a chapter entitled "Musical Autobiography". This is a delightful human document, full of humour, shrewdness, and a most attractive humility. It reminds us that Vaughan Williams' early years, even if they involved no desperate struggle for existence, called for a firm will to continue perseveringly with a slowly maturing technique and very little active encouragement. Of particular interest is his description of the "sense of recognition" that he felt when first making the acquaintance of *Die Walküre* in 1890, and of *Dives and Lazarus* in 1893. His reaction to Wagner is in some ways unexpected, but it is not surprising to learn that he has always responded far more readily to Bach than to Beethoven. Towards the problems of composition, including that of "cribbing", his attitude is sane and individual, and many of his readers will be filled by this chapter with the same mixture of admiration and affection that they feel for his music.

P. F. R.

Essays on Opera. By Egon Wellesz. Pp. 158. (Dobson.) 1950. 10s. 6d.

One of the most pressing problems of the musical life of to-day—perhaps the most pressing of all—is that of Opera, and it is a peculiarly difficult problem for our own country. The problem has three aspects, economic, social and artistic, and they cannot be treated separately. At the present moment we are conscious in England of a great revival of interest in opera; opera is no longer regarded as an inferior form of art, and it is no longer an exclusive entertainment for the wealthiest classes, although it must be admitted that there are still a fair number of people who cling to these beliefs of the past. From the economic point of view opera is still in a very precarious state; even with full houses it cannot pay its way and must be dependent on some sort of official subsidy. Some fifty years ago the Foreign Office, at the instigation, I believe, of Stanford, made an enquiry into the amounts of official subsidies granted to music—which in most countries meant

opera—in all the countries where European music was cultivated; it might be instructive if the Foreign Office would ask for a similar report to-day, for we have no accurate knowledge of the cost of opera abroad in relation to general economic conditions of all kinds.

Dr. Wellesz, in this thoughtful and stimulating collection of papers, is not concerned with economics, but he is acutely conscious of social as well as of artistic conditions as regards opera. The book may at first seem to be divided into two sections which have nothing to do with each other; the first half of it consists of historical research studies, written long ago for academic readers in Vienna and dealing with Viennese Court opera in the seventeenth century, while the later chapters, written mostly in England, discuss opera in the present century from the point of view of a composer. But we can soon see that the modern composer's mind has been profoundly influenced by his historical studies, and although the early chapters are interesting mainly to the musicologist, they have an important bearing on the problems of the present. The reader who is looking towards the future will do well to read them and not ignore them altogether.

Dr. Wellesz' two main contentions are first, that opera has always been and must be a social function, and secondly, that opera ought to concern itself with heroic subjects. This does not mean that he wishes to rule out comic opera altogether; no admirer of Mozart could conceivably do that. And we must not understand "social function" in the colloquial sense, although it is only too obvious that opera has for centuries implied an assembly of fashionable society; when Dr. Wellesz speaks of "society" he means the whole community of music-loving people, whatever their rank and station may be.

"The representation of the heroic on the stage seems to be the only means of checking the process of disintegration which can be seen at work in the last few decades, and of reawakening the feeling for scale in art. Art has been given over for too long to the display of the distortions of the everyday world, the amateurish reproduction of a half-lived life."

Our author here is referring chiefly to a large number of experimental operas like *Jonny spielt auf* which had a momentary vogue in Germany between the wars; but his words will bear a much wider application. One can understand his homage to the "Handel Renaissance" in Germany only by reference to local conditions; that Handel Renaissance in opera, originated by a group of academic idealists in the University of Göttingen (and still kept up there), very soon became merely fashionable. Every German opera house put on *Julius Caesar*—actually one of the least suitable operas of Handel for modern revival—simply because it was considered the "proper thing" to do. Outside Germany the revivals of Handel were negligible. What needed combating, and needs it still, outside Germany and perhaps there too, was and is the tyranny of the old favourites typified by *La Bohème* and *Madame Butterfly*. That degradation of subject has a long history behind it, going back to *comédie larmoyante* and *opera semiseria*. Dr. Wellesz' ideal operas—and ought we not all to share his devotion to them?—are those of Gluck, with *The Magic Flute* and *Fidelio*. Handel could provide a certain type of the heroic; but Handel's real heroes were Senesino and Farinelli, not Caesar and Orlando. The worst degradation brought about by the so-called realistic opera was not the lowering of morality in subject but the exaggeration of singer-worship. Wagner's Isolde is a personality which transcends even the greatest of interpreters; who could take the slightest interest in Puccini's Mimi except as a part for Melba or any of her successors?

Dr. Wellesz does not discuss a certain problem which at this moment is coming very much to the fore—the problem of the "opera festival". If he thinks of it at all, he probably sees it purely from Wagner's point of view, symbolized by Bayreuth as it was in Wagner's lifetime, and he might even say that every single performance of opera, in every opera house in the world, ought to be in itself a festival, a religious and communal festival such as the first performances of Aeschylus were supposed to be. One or two German directors of opera have indeed made quite serious attempts in that direction in the past; they were noble expressions of German idealism, but they were impossible to carry out in practice. None the less German idealism is still a vital force which we cannot

dismiss with the airy condescension of the English "gentleman of taste". The German hero, it has been said, is Siegfried, who always cuts off more than he can chew; it is safer to stick to the well-worn round of *Rigoletto*, *Traviata*, *Bohème* and *Butterfly*, and not attempt, as so many German theatres have done, to introduce works which do not easily fit into the routine repertory.

But the danger of our festivals is they tend too much to become exhibitions of individual virtuosity and gatherings of fashionable society, and they do nothing to raise the standard of routine opera. They are not communal in a wide sense, and they seldom have even the merit of being experimental in new directions. A festival of entirely new operas would have ample justification, even if they were not all of them masterpieces; so would a festival of long-buried antiques. Either type might concentrate the minds of audiences on the works themselves, instead of on singers and conductors; the ideal condition would be that conductors should be invisible, and that all the performers should be anonymous. At some performances of drama this has indeed been done, to the annoyance only of critics like those who went to see *Fanny's First Play*.

This book is not one to be skimmed hastily and laid aside as a mixture of dry research studies and talk about the author's own operas. Both sections need careful consideration and thoughtful re-reading, for they are both not so much descriptions of individual works as discussions of fundamental principles of operatic construction, and they are ultimately expressions of that German artistic idealism which we need now, and especially in our own country, as an inspiration for the future.

E. J. D.

Keys to the Keyboard. By Andor Foldes. Pp. xii + 65. (Oxford University Press.) 1950. 5s.

Mr. Foldes, a pupil of Dohnanyi and now a teacher in America, has described this work as "A Book for Pianists", and those who are interested, whether professionally or otherwise, in the art of piano-playing will certainly find a great deal of valuable advice contained within its pages.

The book is divided into eight chapters, the first seven of which deal, progressively, with various fundamental aspects of piano-study, from the right age at which to start, to thoughts about performing in public. The length of each chapter, noticeably and naturally, varies in proportion to the importance of its subject, and it is significant that most space is devoted to the all-important problem of the Art of Practising or "how not to practise". The final chapter is devoted to further problems that usually arise and these are dealt with, more or less shortly, in the form of Question and Answer. There are questions, for instance, concerning the use of contemporary music in teaching, useful examples of which, in graded form, are suggested at the end of the book, and four-hand playing as a step to *ensemble*-playing, besides many others of equal importance.

Throughout the author has adopted a conversational tone in his style of writing, which makes for easy reading and sustained interest. Understanding of his arguments is further facilitated by the many music examples with which some chapters are illustrated.

B. K. D.

Music Making in the Olden Days. By Henry George Farmer. Pp. viii + 122. (Hinrichsen.) 1950. 15s.

This very comprehensive title might easily lead the reader to expect much more than is to be found in Dr. Farmer's book, and to some it will be disappointing to find that it contains only the records and history of a local musical society, namely, the Aberdeen Musical Society, 1748-1801. Not everyone will agree with the blurb on the cover which suggests that this history will appeal "to a wide circle of readers", but when it is said that it will give music lovers "some idea of what can be done by a comparatively isolated community to foster a love of good music", there can be no denying that it succeeds in making good the claim.

No one could be better qualified to investigate and record the story of this small outpost of Scottish musical activity than Dr. Farmer; it must be granted that the author has done everything that was possible to unearth the necessary material, and that he has presented the sum of his investigations not only in a readable, but also in a scholarly manner. His enthusiasm and national pride may possibly find only a very faint response in the minds of readers who are far removed from the scene of the history, but there must be much in these pages that will stir those who are on the spot and are well versed in local history.

The Aberdeen Musical Society, like many others in the eighteenth century, was initiated and supported by music-loving amateurs, and its performances were stiffened by such meagre professional help as was obtainable locally and by visiting musicians from other towns. It is to the credit of these enthusiasts that they were able to acquire and maintain a "Musik Room" of their own and to build up a library of music and a collection of musical instruments for the use of the performers. Some interesting particulars of the value of the instruments occur in Chapter VI. These Aberdonians were characteristically able to drive a hard bargain if they managed to acquire an oboe for eighteen shillings and a bassoon for a guinea; until we learn that one was a gift from the Earl of Kintore we may wonder how these canny Scots were ever induced to part with as many bawbees as there are in sixteen guineas for a pair of French horns.

The quality of the professional help available may be guessed when we learn that the Leader of the Concerts in 1758, a Mr. Roche, was prepared to give lessons on the violin, German flute, oboe, bassoon, cello, French horn, singing, "guittar", as well as on a comprehensive "etc." which no doubt embraced every other instrument and all branches of theoretical knowledge.

Some specimen programmes and the contents of its library suggest that the Aberdeen society leaned more to instrumental than to vocal music, and that the pieces performed were much the same as were being played by similar societies in England during the same period; there were concertos by Corelli, Vivaldi, Handel, Avison, Geminiani, *etc.*, and overtures by Handel, Arne, San Martini and Pasquali; a few symphonies by Jomelli, Vanhall, Pichl, Haydn and Clementi appear at a later date, but there is little to suggest that a national Scottish school of music existed, or if there was any such thing, that any attempt was made to foster it.

Like so many in the eighteenth century, the Aberdeen Musical Society seems to have outlived its purpose, and to have lost its impulse during the last years of the century, and half-hearted attempts to give it fresh life in the early nineteenth century were not strong enough to revive its falling fortunes and put it on its feet again.

Beethoven-Studien. By Ludwig Misch. Pp. 149. (de Gruyter: Berlin.) 1950. DM. 3.80.

Dr. Ludwig Misch is no doubt one of the many German musical intellectuals who, after suffering under Nazi oppression, have eventually found refuge in the United States of America.

Although this group of essays are all concerned with various aspects of Beethoven's music, each is self-contained and deals with some specific feature or problem. Some of the essays have already appeared in print, and all were apparently written in the breathing-spaces between periods of Nazi horrors. Amongst other themes, Dr. Misch deals with the form of the *Grosse Fuge*, the Finale of the C major Quartet, the "problem" of the D minor Sonata, "Wellington's Victory", and the question why Beethoven wrote four overtures to *Fidelio*. It is suggested in the preface that each essay should be regarded as a prelude to a fuller treatment of the subject which is not yet written. Of the author's sincerity and competence there can be no question; the writing gives evidence of the deep thought that has been brought to bear on each theme, and displays that typical intensity of purpose which distinguishes the work of so many German musicologists of the present day.

There are those to whom this sort of psychological analysis of the working of a composer's mind is stimulating and deeply interesting, and who find that their understanding of his music is increased by probing as far beyond the mere sound of it as it is possible to go. The question is whether anything is gained by thus dismembering the intuitive processes by means of which a composer creates his music; whether it is necessary or advisable to try to unearth some hidden reason for what the composer did instinctively and without any thought except that of the aural effect which his music would have when it was translated into actual sound.

To those who make musical art an intellectual study, Dr. Misch's studies will bring food for further thought and no doubt some mental satisfaction; to those who enjoy music as mere sound and are not concerned with its aesthetical anatomy, these studies will be just rather tiresome and pointless.

The Harp—from Tara's Halls to the American Schools. By Roslyn Rensch. Pp. xvi + 198. (Philosophical Library, New York.) 1950. \$6.00.

The harp occupies a rather isolated position in the family of musical instruments, and is indeed the only representative of its type that has survived throughout a history that goes further back than musical scholarship can trace it. Perhaps it is because of its severely limited range of expression, and because its technique is so largely mechanical, that this instrument is now hardly taken seriously except for what it can contribute towards orchestral effect, and then only when its faint tone is audible; concert-goers are no doubt conscious that they *see* the harp played in an orchestra more often than they *hear* its sounds.

This book of the harp covers in rather sketchy fashion the history, technique and repertoire of the instrument as seen from an American point of view, and it will surprise many European readers to learn how many schools of music, colleges, universities and high schools in the U.S.A. can offer the facilities provided by a "harp department" to those who are anxious seriously to take up the study of the instrument. We can do nothing in this country that shows such enthusiasm for harp playing as is suggested in a photograph (Plate XVIII) of six young girls embracing as many tall harps at the National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan.

Of the general history of the harp there is little in this book that cannot be found in the standard books of reference, but of its introduction and use in the U.S.A. (which is all nineteenth century history), there is information that may not easily be found elsewhere. Some hints about the care of the instrument, and of the player's fingers, is of the sort found only in instruction books, and will no doubt be of interest to players and especially to beginners. The stringing is given due attention, for there is always a right and a wrong way to do such things. It was well over a hundred years ago that someone remarked that it is as expensive to keep a harp as it is to keep a race horse; this refers to the frequent replacement of strings rendered necessary by their great capacity for snapping. We learn that in addition to its use for making stockings, Nylon may also provide material for harp strings; also that it is possible to patch broken strings in the middle octaves; but a few Heath Robinson knots would soon deprive a harp of its well-groomed appearance. Nearly half of the book is given up to lists of published music for the harp, recordings, etc. It will surprise many to see how much has been written for this instrument, even though much of it turns out to be merely transcriptions of well-known pieces. The trouble with most of the music actually composed for the harp is that nearly all of it has been written by harp players. The harp and the flute were favourite drawing-room instruments in the first half of last century, hence a vast quantity of worthless music for both written by numerous "professors" for their amateur pupils.

The book is well illustrated by photographs, and there are a few extracts in musical notation that are not very impressive, notably the Frontispiece—an "Aria in classic style" for harp and string orchestra by Marcel Grandjany; if this is a specimen of America's harp music, it would be advisable to go elsewhere for it.

A. C.

Cymbales et Crotales dans l'Égypte ancienne. By Hans Hickmann. Pp. 95. (Institut Français: Cairo.) 1949.

Miscellanea Musicologica. By Hans Hickmann. Pp. 27. (Institut Français: Cairo.) 1949.

Since his spectacular broadcast in the Third Programme and his lecture on *Music under the Pharaohs* at the Royal Society of British Artists, on 22nd September, 1949, Dr. Hickmann is no longer a stranger to British musicologists. A one time pupil of Friedrich Blume and Curt Sachs, he settled in Egypt, where he built up a reputation as an authority on the musical instruments of ancient Egypt. Only quite recently he published in the first instalment of Professor Blume's "Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart" some well conceived and strikingly illustrated articles on Egyptian, Ethiopian and Arabian music (the latter in collaboration with A. Chottin). It is in such highly specialized studies as these (lavishly adorned with charts, graphs and illustrations), that Hickmann's patient scholarship attains its most impressive results and is able to add substantially to Curt Sachs' authoritative studies on oriental music. In his publications of 1946/48 Dr. Hickmann had discussed the Egyptian trumpet, harp and lute and described a hitherto unknown type of the coptic lute. The publications of 1949 draw attention to the old Egyptian cymbals and rattles, collecting a wealth of ancient pictorial proof and linking it ingeniously with reproductions of similar instruments in the illustrated pages of mediaeval Psalteria, thus demonstrating the intricate cultural bond existing between oriental music practice and its early Christian successors in Europe. The last volume of 1949 is specially devoted to a rare case of antique cheironomy (*i.e.* the indication of the actual melodic curve through the gestures of a conductor at a time when music was mainly orally transmitted) surviving in the chant and gestures of the coptic singer Guirguis, whose artistic method is vividly illustrated on 12 photographic plates. His tone production is pictorially juxtaposed with some enlarged figures from the famous singing angels of J. van Eyck's altar piece (Gent, 1432). This last named issue contains also another study on Egyptian harps and lutes. Dr. Hickmann, who has recently published a general catalogue of all instruments in the Museum of Cairo (1947/48), has put all scholars interested in the most ancient musical practice of our hemisphere under special obligation. His essays should be collected, translated into English and published at an early date.

H. F. R.

A MASTER'S TESTAMENT

Style and Idea. By Arnold Schönberg. Edited by Dika Newlin. Pp. vii + 224. (Williams & Norgate.) 1951. 15s.

I do not propose to evaluate this pregnant and learned work as a music critic, *i.e.* in the manner of William Hymanson's technical examination of Schönberg's string Trio (1946) in MR: XI, 3. I have not the necessary musical equipment. I must confine myself to its philosophical implications, as the *Confiteor* (in Baudelaire's phrase) of the artist. Almost wherever I open it I find a flash of true greatness and the self-knowledge that the Greeks desiderated in obedience to the Delphic Oracle. I have not read anything so illuminating on the subject of artistic creation generally since J. A. Stewart's *Plato's Doctrine of Ideas* (1909), and I can imagine no better plan for an aspirant in any branch of creative activity (not just music) who has doubts, as we all must at times, of his or her artistic integrity than at once to acquire it and brood over its pages. If I say little, therefore, it is not because I do not feel, though there is much here, in detail, that I may never be able to understand.

You remember in Plato the insistence that it is not where the argument leads us that is important, but the argumentative road itself. These fifteen essays, of varying lengths, covering nearly forty years, resume in no dogmatic fashion the experience of a life given to art; they are the product (this is important) of a mind that believes in God, that realizes that inspiration must be *given*, that a work of art is a totality, not a conglomeration of particulars, and that the sincere creator questions and analyses his results long after they have been obtained. The observation (p. 113) on the two principal themes

in the composer's *Kammersymphonie*, the apparent absence of relation between which troubled him, is significant: "Fortunately, I stood by my inspiration and ignored these mental tortures. About twenty years later I saw the true relationship." The appreciation of Mahler contains, *apropos* of masterpieces, the observation, as old as Plotinus, who applies it to those who question Nature *why* she creates anything, that silence, respectful silence, should be the fitting response when we do not understand the meaning, as well as the salutary warning that the inspiration is not the theme, but the whole work. The book, in a sense, is a justification of cerebrality, showing at every point that, granted the inspiration, no amount of logical thinking is unnecessary. From this point of view the derivation of the last movement from the first in Brahms' fourth Symphony, the proof of the essential homogeneity of the first movement of Beethoven's F minor Quartet, and the discussion of the *Muss es sein?* theme in his last are *aperçus* of the highest order. The last occurs in the essay on composition with twelve tones, and the remark on unconscious cerebration that accompanies it, in relation to what the religious call Faith, is so vital that it must be quoted:

"Whether or not this device was used consciously by Beethoven does not matter at all. From my own experience I know that it can also be a subconsciously received gift from the Supreme Commander."

This may strike many in this country, not merely atheists, as a continental manner of speech. It is the *ipse dixit* of one of the few great minds of our time. E. H. W. M.

Gramophone Records†

LONG-PLAYING

Bach: Cantata No. 11—Praise Our God.

Kathleen Ferrier, W. Herbert, W. Parsons, Ena Mitchell,
The Cantata Singers and the Jacques Orchestra, c. Reginald Jacques.
Decca LX 3006. 29s. 6d.

Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 4 and 6.

The Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, c. Karl Münchinger.
Decca LXT 2501. 39s. 6d.

Haydn: Symphony No. 101 in D major.

L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Ansermet.
Decca LX 3009. 29s. 6d.

Mozart: Symphony No. 35 in D major, K. 385, and

Handel-Harty: The Water Music Suite.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Van Beinum.
Decca LXT 2534. 39s. 6d.

Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade—Symphonic Suite, Op. 35.

L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, c. Ansermet.
Decca LXT 2508. 39s. 6d.

The above may be considered as a representative selection of the new Decca products; in any case, they represent this reviewer's first experience of long-playing records. They were tried on a number of instruments and assessment of their quality was based upon performance with two high-fidelity outfits, one of which had been specially designed to play them and one in which the reviewer's existing amplifier had been modified to match their characteristics.

† Beginning with this issue, and until further notice, all prices quoted are inclusive of Purchase Tax [E.D.].

In the first instance it requires to be stated that buyers who expect to get the best out of long-playing records, as we know them at present, from commercial LP or dual-speed playing-desks plugged into existing commercial radiograms, are liable to be severely disappointed. It should be somebody's job to issue explicit instructions for the kind of needles, pick-ups, motors and amplifier circuits required for optimum reproduction.

Careful experimentation with the known devices for modification of instrument response over the range of recordable frequencies leaves no doubt as to the basic defect common to all the above issues. Top frequencies are very harsh; the most lamentable result of this is that strings, playing in the upper registers, are here recorded to a standard markedly lower than we have come to accept on ordinary discs. The extreme clarity of the singing voice and of wood and brass registration does not make up for this basic defect. The freedom from surface noise of a *clean* record is, generally, impressive. But these records are *very* difficult to keep clean. The surface attraction for dust is most noticeable and is almost certainly related to the static electrical surface charge on the particular synthetic resin used for their manufacture. Trouble from such charges has been overcome in the case of other industrial synthetic products, *e.g.* textile fibres, and might possibly be attended to here.

Ten years ago, all the above issues might have been acceptable. By present 78 r.p.m. standards, they will not do. The pick of these titles is the Bach *Cantata*. Beautifully performed, the forces employed have clearly made for an easier job of recording than is the case with any of the heavier orchestral performances, of which, significantly, *Scheherazade* is quite the worst. As to artistry in performance, it is worth saying that the efforts here considered were worthy of better reproduction in every case. The Mozart-Handel coupling particularly could have been a collector's piece.

J. B.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY†

Beethoven: Sonata No. 30 in E major, Op. 109.

Wilhelm Backhaus.

Decca AX 361-62. 19s. 5d.* LXT 2535. 39s. 6d.

Bloch: Sacred Service.

Dorothy Bond, Doris Cowan and Marko Rothmüller with the London Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, c. Ernest Bloch.

Decca AX 377-82. 58s. 3d.* LXT 2516. 39s. 6d.

Stravinsky: Petrouchka.

L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Ansermet.

Decca AX 328-32. 48s. 6½d. LXT 2502. 39s. 6d.

The long-playing (LP) versions have these advantages over their "78" counterparts: almost complete absence of surface noise: greatly improved continuity: lower cost. (In the case of the Beethoven Sonata, the LP disc carries the Chopin B flat minor Sonata on the reverse.) On the other hand, LPs have a great affinity for dust and are very difficult to clean. So much for material factors.

But the fundamental question is whether LPs or 78s make the more realistic approach to the sound of true music. Let no one assume that forming judgment is simply a matter of playing a few samples of each. It could be, if we were certain that the pick-up and pre-amplifier employed in each case were in all respects equivalent in efficiency and quality. It is, of course, essential to ensure properly matched amplifier characteristics for each type of record and also to use only the highest quality equipment available; but, even so, there will almost certainly remain some slight discrepancies in the behaviour of the equipment as between LPs and 78s. This factor may have some bearing on the judgment which follows.

† See also the article by Joseph Enock on pp. 142-4 [ED.].

* Strongly recommended.

Your reviewer has taken great care to establish the fairest possible conditions for comparison and has reached the conclusion that *at present* there is no basis for any claim that long-playing orchestral records even approach the best 78s in the matter of real musical quality. For example the recent His Master's Voice issue of Bantock's *Fifine at the Fair* will produce a sound very close indeed to that of a full orchestra, with something of the true balance, body, atmosphere and life of the real thing. All LP records of orchestral music which I have heard sound like what they are: gramophone records, of all grades of quality from downright bad to reasonably acceptable. Where these LPs fail most obviously, and the same criticism could be and was levelled at the early *ffr* 78s, is in the matter of violin tone in general and E-string tone in particular. In these common days too many fiddlers use too many wire strings, but that the violin itself should sound as though its body had been stamped from tinplate is an aberration of Decca's recording engineers and one that needs to be eradicated.

The outstanding success of LP so far is its marked ability to capture the true colours and personal idiosyncrasies of individual human voices: *e.g.* Rothmüller in the *Sacred Service*; while percussion, bass instruments and transients in general come off well.

Piano tone in the Beethoven Sonata is excellent in the 78 set which, despite some surface hiss, is much to be preferred to its twangy, banjo-like LP counterpart which also introduces some irritating "rattles" of its own. Backhaus seems to miss some of the poetry of the work, but the combination of his first-class musicianship and impeccable technique produces an interpretation of undeniable authority.

Despite some peculiarities of balance and one or two rather shaky moments, presumably due to the composer's curious conducting technique, the records of the *Sacred Service* are very rewarding and are hardly likely to be superseded. The 78 version is slightly better than the LP.

Readers who possess the previous issue of *Petrouchka* (Decca K 1388-92: London Phil. Orch., c. Ansermet) may not wish to change it for the new and slightly more expensive LP or for the much more expensive 78s. The new records are a little firmer and better defined in the bass, but upper strings are very wiry and harsh (both LP and 78) and compare unfavourably with the five-year-old set. G. N. S.

Beethoven: *Sonata in C minor, Op. III, and Sonatina No. 38 in F major.*
Solomon.

His Master's Voice C 4000-3. 27s. 4d.

Bach: *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor.*
Geraint Jones.

His Master's Voice C 7790-1. 13s. 8d.

Greatness in execution is called for in the last sonatas—from the *Hammerklavier* to the final *Op. III*—not because they are harder to play than the others but because here, as nowhere else in piano literature, the mechanics of performance are taken utterly for granted. This is virtuoso music in a sense other than that which applies to Liszt or Chopin at their most exacting. With those composers, no matter what the spirit of the work, excitement and exhilaration come always from the appearance of mountainous difficulties smoothly overcome. In late Beethoven the existence of such should never be apparent. Only when this is so can the listener grasp the profundity, the serenity and the abandon of Beethoven's maturest intimacy with the keyboard. In this recording of the last Sonata, Solomon has completely mastered the writing in a performance beyond all praise. The recording, however, falls far short of perfection; if artistic standards were any touchstone in the manufacture of gramophone records, the Gramophone Co. would have held up this issue, the while Solomon went on playing the work until the engineers had discovered how to record his piano. As this will not happen, these records must be accepted as the best performances ever offered of the work and as a telling example of the shortcomings of recording technique. Solomon's delicately cheerful rendering of the little Sonatina on the odd side is exactly right, and these two happy movements are a well chosen curtain-raiser to the massive serenity of the Sonata.

The Bach issue, gloriously played on the famous Hamburg organ of the Church of St. Martin and St. Nicholas, and beautifully recorded, is ruined by an insane and gratuitous effect of fading the organ out at the end of each side, and even fading *in* on one side.

Bach: Concerto in E major.*

Szymon Goldberg and the Philharmonia Orchestra with Ernest Lush, c. Walter Süsskind.

Parlophone R 20582-4. 29s. 1½d.

Scarlatti: Concerto No. 1 in G major.

Leon Goossens and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Walter Süsskind.

Columbia DX 8347-8. 13s. 8d.

Every so often, one hears a Bach instrumental performance in which the player has both the insight to grasp the composer's *structural* intentions and the strength of mind not to smudge them with his own personal reflections. Casals was the last player one could regularly rely on for these *desiderata* in instrumental recitals. And, for some reason, we have, until now, never met them in a recorded Bach performance. Goldberg here achieves this fusion of insight and integrity and, by a happy accident, is very well accompanied. The tone of this recording is a trifle harsh and may not please everybody. These records are unreservedly recommended in the face of any previous recordings, no matter how recently issued or well received.

The "Scarlatti" work is a suite of five short and unidentifiable bits and pieces, possibly not all of keyboard origin, arranged by a Mr. Bryan. Goossens makes his contribution with the usual urbane mastery and the orchestra, conductor and sound engineers are on their toes. It is all to no readily apparent musical purpose. On the fourth side the oboist is accompanied by Gerald Moore in a version of Gabriel Pierné's *Aubade*.

Haydn: Symphony No. 93 in D.

N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, c. Cantelli.

His Master's Voice DB 21014-6. 29s. 1½d.

Méhul: Overture, Les Deux Aveugles de Tolède.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.

His Master's Voice DB 21084. 9s. 8½d.

The Haydn is sprightly, even brilliant, in performance. But it is not accurate. The best movement is the *Largo Cantabile*; all who know it are endeared by the characteristic *ff* bassoon exploit nine bars from the end. Its purpose is, of course, to herald the *coda*; it is related rhythmically to the body of the movement by timpani strokes at bars 72 and 73. Signor Cantelli *leaves out* the timpani, and the whole point of Haydn's "end game" to the movement is lost. He also misses out a large piece of the finale; bars 19 to 52 should be repeated. The recording is very strident.

The delicious Méhul overture was revived by Sir John Barbiroli in recent Hallé concerts and all who have heard it have hoped for a recording. But this one will not do; it is a flat performance badly recorded.

Wagner: Lohengrin, Act I: "Einsam in trüben Tagen", and

Tannhäuser, Act II: "Dich, teure, Halle".

Victoria de los Angeles and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Fistoulari.

His Master's Voice DB 21095. 9s. 8½d.

Verdi: I Vespri Siciliani, Act II: "O tu Palermo", and

Weber: Der Freischütz, Act I: "Schweig! Schweig!"

Ludwig Weber and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Ackermann and Prohaska.

Columbia LX 1310. 9s. 8½d.

* Strongly recommended.

Victoria de los Angeles goes on, from opera to opera, in all languages exhibiting for our delight her fine voice and catholic abilities. The best part of her Wagner record is the long orchestral prelude to the *Tannhäuser aria*. It is beautifully played and recorded to the highest standards we have so far met. The singer's contribution is solidly good, but not of her excellent best on either side. Ludwig Weber's record is good in every department.

J. B.

*Bartók: Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta.**

Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, c. Harold Byrns.

Capitol CK 51001-3. 29s. 1½d.

I do not think I shall be far wrong in applying "masterpiece" here. Let me say at once that a real service has been done to the cause of music; in particular to those (like myself) who knew of Bartók the Rebel only by reputation, were not discontented with Bartók the Reformed, and wondered on the evidence shown by the Concerto for Orchestra and violin Concerto and the even more recent viola Concerto what all the fuss had been about. First and foremost this astonishing work provokes a question which has very little relevance to the recording itself. What happened to its composer between September, 1936 (when the piece was completed in Switzerland) and December, 1938, the date of the violin Concerto? Surely something radical: something that has not yet been satisfactorily explained by the Bartók specialists. Serge Moreux in his book on Bartók (Richard-Masse, Paris, 1949) argues thus of the composer's final period (1938-1945): "... l'heure est venue pour lui de jouir de son labeur et de nous en faire jouir, d'inventer ses méthodes et de nous les transmettre". That would seem to be a sentimental view, and it strikes me rather painfully in view of the superb nature of this middle-period work that often what Bartók chose to transmit to us were the least significant of his characteristics and methods. It is almost tragic that the third piano Concerto for instance should have so little about it that makes the *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* so memorable. There was more than a change of technique: the desire to please can't be the whole story. Rightly or wrongly, there was a change of heart that should prove to be of the greatest historical interest. The *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* has made me eager to find a diagnosis.

That question put, we may proceed to the music itself. The first movement *Andante Tranquillo*, a slow fugue. Its subject is of special importance as it continually crops up throughout the whole work. In many ways this first movement is the weightiest of the four; and that isn't casting any discredit on the succeeding three. Indeed, it's not altogether a question of musical weight: rather spiritual weight (if that is not a contradiction in terms). The constant references to the fugue drag us back not only to its musical substance but also (psychologically) to our initial point of departure when we hear the subject for the first time at the work's very opening: we are constantly having to consider the present with the past at our musical elbow so to speak. The first time I heard the records, two other works—neither by Bartók—were fresh in my mind at the fugue's conclusion. One was Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and the other Berg's *Lyric Suite*, which does something to show the progressiveness of Schönberg's early "reactionary" period and the sometimes regressive tendencies of Berg's later music. Not that the Bartók had started a series of derivations in my mind, but rather a series of associations; a very different and rather more useful mental pursuit. My immediate associational intuitions were of course right (as most musical intuitions are) because the first movement of this *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* demonstrates in most developed form where and how Bartók's style joined musical hands with Schönberg's method of composition with twelve tones. The enquiring listener will find that the first two entries of the fugue (allowing for deletions of duplicated notes) combine into an admittedly not very dodecaphonic tone-row: nevertheless the fructifying influence of one master's genius on another's remains for all to see. The fugue includes inversions of the subject, combined

* Strongly recommended.

with the subject itself (inversions, incidentally, which are audible: that is they are *heard* as inversions and don't need to be seen to be believed) against the icy *arpeggios* of the celesta.

The second movement, a brisk *Allegro*, recapitulates some of the fugue's material; perhaps as important is Bartók's ingenious handling of his double string orchestra and his genuinely percussive use of percussion instruments. His variable time signatures—the *Allegro* begins with a plain enough $\frac{2}{4}$ but soon leads to a nest of bars marked alternately $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{2}{5}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{5}{5}$ $\frac{2}{8}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{8}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{8}{8}$, etc.—give the score the appearance of a child's arithmetic book. But Bartók's rhythmic manipulations prove to be anything but childish. Whereas in the fugue they secure the utmost fluidity of polyphonic writing and phrasing, here they break up the strict metre established at the movement's beginning and pave the way for the sardonic dance rhythm into which the $\frac{2}{4}$ *allegro* is finally transformed.

The third movement, *Adagio*, both begins and ends (almost) with the rhythmic knocking of a xylophone; it sets a mood of both complete rigidity and frigidity before moving into a warmer sphere induced by the strings with a theme which is about the nearest Bartók gets melodically (in this work) to a folk chant. A martial five-note figure and fragmentary references to the first movement play their part in relieving the *Adagio*'s sometimes glacial calm. But it is in the finale, a kind of free rondo, that the fugue makes its last and most impressive appearance. Here it enters as a *coda*—with this important difference. Hitherto it has been distinguished by its intense chromaticism and chromatic intensification: now it appears in diatonic guise. Necessity becomes not only a virtue but a stroke of genius: new light is thrown on the original subject: the whole first movement is revealed to us at a fresh angle of vision and in a manner inexpressibly poignant, and, let it be said, overwhelmingly beautiful. By reserving this harmonic turn for his last pages Bartók matches the profundity of his own first movement; the present both achieves and exceeds the promise of the past.

The recording is satisfactory, although now and again the balance between percussion and strings is rather too much in the latter's favour. Slight over-amplification is noticeable. The performance—judged by my response—must be an understanding one.

Vaughan Williams: Symphony No. 6 in E minor.

London Symphony Orchestra, c. Boult.

His Master's Voice C 3873-6. 27s. 4d.

This last Symphony of Vaughan Williams raises all kinds of questions about symphonies in general and Vaughan Williams' symphonies in particular. Its first performance occasioned a great deal of ballyhoo which perhaps explains (at least partially) why the work impresses on its first hearing. What it does not explain is why the Symphony depresses subsequently. The whole piece reminds me of the Cheshire Cat: it fades, recedes, and finally vanishes, although we have not the consolation of a lingering smile. Even such a stalwart apologist as Hubert Foss, in his recent study of the composer, has to confess himself puzzled: "I have not yet made up my mind about the weight of this work". I think there are substantial musical reasons for Mr. Foss' indecision. First the structure of the symphony, taken *in toto*, is extremely difficult to come to terms with, and by reason of its very nature is not likely, as a form, to give much musical satisfaction. It can be compared to an escalator that unwinds itself eternally downwards. The first movement, by far the most interesting musically, starts at a peak of high excitement and for the most part sustains it: the second, for all its noise, is several steps lower in tension: even a reiterated rhythm at its most powerful can be soporific in effect. The scherzo which might have fulfilled a rehabilitatory function fails to do so, largely because it fails to *sound* as music. The succeeding *Epilogue* is notorious enough to warrant no further description. Now to descend on an escalator once is fascinating enough, especially when one does not know what awaits one in the lower depths. But the journey made,

it is both human and musical nature to look for an escalator that will carry us up in the opposite direction. Both artistic and moral principles are ultimately offended by continuous decline: personally the knowledge that embarking on the first movement of this Symphony must inevitably lead me downhill to a musically negative *Epilogue* is the most effective deterrent I know to listening to the work at all. In this case familiarity does not breed contempt, but despair. There remain many things I am unable to understand. The first movement seems to suffer from singular stylistic disparities and discrepancies—an uneasy coalition between the Vaughan Williams of the F minor Symphony and the Vaughan Williams of *Greensleeves*. Not all his cunning developmental preparation convinces me that the logical result of it must be the big so-obviously-modal theme which appears (harps and all) at the first movement's conclusion: it is neither right in its context nor in its texture. What is developed bears no relation to its development. If one discounts the rhythmic impulse of the second movement, what is left? Only an impression of aridity and lack of real thematic invention. The scherzo in my view is pretty nearly non-musical, the *Epilogue* an evasion of the problem of writing a last movement. I should hesitate to accuse Vaughan Williams of taking the easy way out, but epilogues to my mind are suspect. Mahler was one of the few who could successfully place his *Adagio* last, partly because his slow movements are often not much slower than his quick. But what was it Vaughan Williams wrote of Mahler? "... a very tolerable imitation of a composer". A structural comparison of Mahler's ninth and Vaughan Williams' sixth symphonies would not waste anybody's time: not even—I suggest with all respect—Vaughan Williams'. Both recording and performance are competent.

Fauré: La Bonne Chanson, Op. 61.

Sophie Wyss and Kathleen Long, and

Debussy: L'Échelonnement des Haies.

Ravel: Nicolette.

Sophie Wyss, acc. Josephine Southey-John.

Decca AF 9414-8. 23s. 4d.

From the vocal point of view this recording is inadequate. Miss Wyss does not seem to have either the maturity of artistic conception or fulness of tone to cope with the demands this song-cycle makes. On the other hand, Kathleen Long's side of the partnership is perfectly achieved. Nevertheless, the set is to be welcomed if only for the opportunity it gives us to study Fauré's remarkable music; and close acquaintance is the only method of understanding a style which on a first hearing is liable to strike one as remote, even characterless. This is partially due to Fauré's harmonic unpredictability: the unexpected, paradoxically enough, often leaves us with the reverse impression that we have heard it all before. To prove ourselves wrong we have only to turn over the last record and listen carefully to Debussy's *L'Échelonnement des Haies*. Debussy seems to be doing the harmonically unexpected, particularly in the final cadence, until we realize that it was as inevitable as the sun's rise and as superficially surprising. We return to Fauré with a new respect and a resolve to look a little deeper next time. Quite outstanding is the subtle cyclicism which ensures that the work stands as a whole: not one song can be separated from its fellows. "Leit-motif" is almost too clumsy an expression for Fauré's self-effacing inter-thematic devices which bind the nine songs together into an astonishing unity. A thematic catalogue would destroy what should be a delight gradually revealed to the attentive listener. Opportunities such as this work affords for appraising both the mechanics of art and art itself simultaneously are extremely rare: in Fauré the two are interdependent and inextricably mixed.

D. M.

Schubert: Heidenröslein and Wiegenlied.

Irmgard Seefried, acc. Nordberg.

Columbia LB 78. 6s. 5½d.

Apart from her sudden bolting at the end of *Heidenröslein's* second verse, Miss Seefried has none of that flippant soubrette-manner with which many Austrian ladies

spoil this song. But her pasty *legato* is not the thing either, prompted as it is by purely technical considerations. Even so, she cannot avoid a number of "white" notes between C" and E" while the top-notes (G") slide into place only at considerable preparatory expense. *Heidenröslein* is one of those half-*legato*, half-*staccato* *Lieder*, which only those can sing who could provide it with □ and v, were it a violin part. Only after this would its vocal study seem profitable. *Wiegenlied* is much better sung, and imaginatively phrased, except for the disturbing *caesurae* between the third and fourth bar of some of its 4-bar phrases. The commas in the first line of its text must not tempt the singer to fall into 1-bar phrasing later on.

Puccini: Tosca: "Recondita armonia" and "E lucevan le stelle".

Eugene Conley with the New Symphony Orchestra, c. Royalton Kisch.

Decca M 656. 5s. 9d.

Very noble singing, shunning all cheap effects. Mr. Conley's voice is beautifully in line except for the Ab'—Bb'—Ab' grace-notes of "E lucevan". The recording has good depth, and the orchestra is almost in time with the singer which is difficult (and rare) in Puccini.

Schumann: Symphonic Studies, Op. 13.

Mewton-Wood.

Decca AK 2361-3. 24s. 9d.

Since Mewton-Wood is a young pianist of exceptional promise who has not yet recorded much, it may not be amiss to subject this issue to a thorough critical analysis. But it should be remembered that, were M-W's standard not as high as it is, we would not have troubled to draw attention to many of the following lapses.

Theme: beautiful touch, phrasing of a foreboding quietness.

1st Study. M-W takes it at ♩ = 100 as prescribed by some editions. Surely the older metronome-mark ♩ = 72, together with the heading *Un poco piu vivo*, is much more in style after the *Andante* theme. At that pace, the uniquely ghostly character of this study would transpire. With its sharp rhythms and dark, reverberating chords it is rather like a midnight-walk through some old romantic armoury. D♭ for D# is correct on the last quaver of bar 11.

2nd Study. This is turbulent without being animated, the phrasing being sufficiently free yet not quite consequent. Thus, the *ritardando-cum-diminuendo*, pointing out the skip of the tune from bass to treble, and vice versa, is good in bars 5 and 13, but is a misguided attempt at the same effect in bars 6 and 14.

3rd Study. Anxiety makes the tricky right hand stick out at first, but from the repeat on, the tenor takes over and remains in charge to the end, as it ought to be.

4th Study. Should be preceded by a break. Nice chord-playing, except bars 9-12 where the *acciaccaturas* mislead M-W into slurring 1st and 2nd, and 3rd and 4th beats.

5th Study. Too dry without pedal. The magical smoothness of bars 8 and 16 can also be achieved by taking fuller pedal here, having used touches before.

6th Study. Excellent! M-W manages to make the tenor the *leading* voice while keeping up its demisemiquaver syncopation. The treble *accompanies* while staying on the beat.

7th Study. It is pedantic here to detach the first three semiquavers of every group from the fourth, with the result that not only is the fourth semiquaver unmelodic when it comes, but also that the whole study sounds scrappy.

8th Study. I am glad that M-W plays the bar of accompaniment prefixed in the first edition only. The *pp* of the first half of this study must have caught the engineers napping. M-W's phrasing, when it emerges in the second part, is intelligent, but not free enough to allow for the interplay of cross-rhythms.

12th Study (Finale). This exposes a habit against which M-W must guard: his unawareness of punctuation. When he overrides the commas of the finale's main-section,

this may go for youthful impetuosity. But when he sweeps across the full-stop of the *seconda volta* bar right into the first episode, repeating this again and again, the effect is one of bad temper. The whole finale sounds, in fact, disgruntled, since it starts a fraction too fast and gathers speed a good deal, wrong notes and muffled tone supervening in due course. Only the *coda* recaptures the idea of Schumann's *Allegro brillante*.

The recording is rather tinny, especially in the treble.

*Ravel: Quartet in F major.**

Paganini Quartet.

His Master's Voice DB 9452-5. 38s. 10d.

A masterly performance of a master-piece. Among the many highlights are the leisurely phrasing of the 1st movement's leisurely sonata-form (note the lead-back to the recapitulation, fig. 9-10); the most touching beginning of the 3rd movement, and, later in this movement, the inspired *Pressez* towards and *Cédez* away from fig. 3, not indicated by Ravel. Altogether, the Paganini Quartet, more than others, nicely stresses the stylistic difference between the pen-and-wash technique of the 1st and 3rd, and the Sisleyan *pointilliste* treatment of the 2nd and 4th movements. The only musical blemishes are the dryness of the 1st violin's *arco*-theme in the scherzo—Ravel's "*bien chanté*" means to link this theme to its occurrence in the slow trio—and some uneasy phrasing in the bridge-passage following fig. 24 in the last movement. The perfect blend of the Quartet's Stradivarius instruments shows to great advantage in the bar-by-bar interchanges between 1st and 2nd violin at the very beginning, and in the risky unisons between 1st violin and viola, and 1st violin and cello in the first movement, which are quite in tune. The recording is fairly satisfactory, but all *pizzicati*, especially the cello's, sound harsh. The fill-up is the *Presto* from Haydn's Op. 33, No. 2.

Brahms: "Gestillte Sehnsucht", Op. 91, No. 1.

Kirsten Flagstad, Gerald Moore, Herbert Downes (viola).

His Master's Voice DA 1932. 6s. 5½d.

The singing is beautiful; so is the *ensemble* (except in the short developmental middle-part) and Mr. Downes' playing (except for his double-stops). Flagstad's slurs, since they are so extended, should be lighter. The recording goes a long way towards a good mixture.

Verdi: Falstaff: "Sul fil d'un soffio etesio", and

Rossini: William Tell: "Selva opaca, deserta brughiera".

Lina Pagliughi with the EIAR Orchestra, c. Ugo Tansini.

Parlophone R 30004. 9s. 8½d.

Giordano: Il Re: "O Colombello, sposarti", and

Rossini: Semiramide: "Bel raggio lusinghier".

Lina Pagliughi with the EIAR Orchestra, c. A. La Rosa Parodi.

Parlophone R 30015. 9s. 8½d.

Ponchielli: La Gioconda: "L'amo come il fulgar del creato", and

Cilea: Adriana Lecouvreur: "Io son sua per l'amore".

Gignà Cigna and Cloe Elmo with the EIAR Orchestra, c. Ugo Tansini.

Parlophone R 30013. 9s. 8½d.

Giordano: Fedora: "Mia madre, la mia vecchia madre!" and "La fante mi svela".

Galliano Masini with the Orchestra Sinfonica della Radio Italiana, c. Arturo Basile.

Parlophone R 30006. 9s. 8½d.

Mme. Pagliughi wields the full brilliance of her coloratura-soprano in the excerpts from *Il Re* and *Semiramide*. In the *Tell* aria she is apt to be flat, and her voice slips back in

* Strongly recommended.

the middle-register; neither does she quite capture, in the song from *Falstaff*, the "through bush, through briar" magic which Verdi in this piece has taken over from Shakespeare. The two ladies on Parlophone 30013 are very good, and utterly Italian in their delivery. I would have no quarrel with Masini's dramatic shouting, weeping and slobbering, which is borne out by the music, if it did not occur to him, once in a while, that as a brilliant tenor he'd better produce some victorious top-notes.—Recordings fair.

Beethoven: Sonata in C minor, Op. 30, No. 2.

Max Rostal (violin), Franz Osborn (piano).

Decca AK 2356-9. 33s.

While all will agree that this Decca set sounds much clearer than the recent Columbia issue of the same Sonata, played by Wolfgang Schneiderhan and Friedrich Wührer, opinions will be divided as to the musical merits of these sets. Messrs. Rostal and Osborn play with all the *finesse* of modern textual and technical Beethoven scholarship, and besides, bring a fervent imagination to their task which leaves no doubt as to the phraseological position of even the smallest note in the score. Messrs. Schneiderhan and Wührer's playing has more sweep, less detail, and is nearer to the commonly accepted German Beethoven tradition. Finding that the Germans, with the exception of Furtwängler, Schnabel, and a few others, habitually understate their Beethoven, I personally prefer the conception of Rostal and Osborn. Their intense insight into this score produces such moments as the hushed tragedy of the beginning of the 1st movement's *coda*, the evanescent gaiety of the finale's C major episode, or the *espressivo* with bated breath before the final *Presto*. But sometimes, the very excellence of their ideas lays them open to dangers from which a less decided utterance would be free: the very slow speed of their *Adagio* emphasizes on the one hand the rapt spirituality of the main-section, but on the other, makes the phrasing of its first (A♭ minor) episode and of the *coda* precariously unstable. Equally, the scherzo, at their restrained pace, has much more wit and punch than otherwise, but Mr. Osborn in bars 4, 21, 36, and bars 15-20 of the trio, and Prof. Rostal in bars 23, 24 of the trio, cannot avoid little eddies of hurrying encroaching on their rhythm. Mr. Osborn's playing, while always intrinsically musical, is not quite clean in the *coda* of the 1st movement and in the *fugato* development and the *coda* of the finale. P. H.

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A FURTHER NOTE ON MOZART'S DUET SONATA K. 19d

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—The additional information mentioned in the postscript to my article in the February issue of THE MUSIC REVIEW (p. 34), consists of a notice in *The Analytical Review* for September, 1789 (p. 111). The text of this runs as follows:

Art. LXXV. *A Duet for two Performers on one Piano-Forte or Harpsichord.* By A. Moyart [sic]. Pr. 2s. Andrews.

"This is a pleasing, familiar composition, and the parts are so adjusted as to move together with very good effect. It comprises three movements; the first in common time of four crochets in a bar, the second a *minuetto* 3/4 with a trio, and the third a rondo 2/4 *allegretto*. In the first movement we discover a pleasing train of ideas, well connected, and somewhat novel; the minuetto is also conceived with taste and ingenuity, while the rondo, or concluding movement, possesses a spirited subject, successfully relieved by its several digressions. This piece, we apprehend, by the ease of its style, not to be designed for proficient on the pianoforte or harpsichord, but for the use of practitioners, for whose improvement it certainly is well calculated, and will be found by them as pleasing as it is profitable."

We may note that the amusing misprint "Moyart" is preceded by the solitary, and unusual, initial "A.". Despite the lack of any opus number, or mention of key, there is no doubt that this is a review of op. 16, K.19d. No other duet by Mozart has three movements corresponding exactly with the details of *tempi* given in this review, which, though not to be classed as profound criticism, is quite a perceptive piece of writing for its period.

The inclusion of the name of Andrews as the publisher at the head of the review is singularly fortunate, because it justifies my conjecture that his was the name under the superimposed imprint "R. Birchall" (cf. pl. 1, and p. 31). But it still does not explain satisfactorily why a Mozart duet, or perhaps a series of them, was taken over from Andrews by Birchall.

The date at which the review appeared, September, 1789, is most informative. Since Andrews and Birchall broke their partnership in May of that year, Andrews must have issued this duet in the course of the summer, that is over two and a half years before the De Roulede edition appeared. (This gap is based on the assumption that the term "brand-new" as quoted by Einstein from the notice in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* for June, 1792, connotes a lapse of not more than a few months.) Nevertheless, it still seems unlikely, on textual grounds, that De Roulede had copied Andrews, and while the priority of the English edition can now be clearly established, the source of both remains as puzzling as ever. Andrews' edition bears the price "2s.", Birchall's reissue, "3s.". This rise suggests that the earliest date for the latter is about 1795, since the increase of 50 per cent. in music prices did not occur till the Napoleonic Wars were well advanced.

Yours faithfully,
A. HYATT KING.

Ashmansworth,
nr. Newbury, Berks.
24th November, 1950.

EDITORIAL PRACTICE

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—Dr. Redlich, in his review of my edition of John Stanley's Concerto No. 3, asks me a question.

I cannot possibly tell him how the orchestral part of *Messiah* was performed, nor can anyone else.

Did he not get as far as to read, in the prefatory note, that "as the interpretation of the unwritten traditions of every age is sometimes a matter of dispute it has been thought better to include the original notation"?

This sentence alone should have been sufficient for Dr. Redlich to realize that I was not at all oblivious of the anomalies of the arbitrary notation of the period. He must also know perfectly well that we have suffered in the past from a good many editors who have tampered with their texts. I have in mind, for instance, one who spent much of his life "editing", or rather rehashing and trying to fit into a 19th-century canon, English 18th-century music, and whose texts are frequently a complete travesty of the originals.

It is particularly unfortunate that Dr. Redlich should appear to approve of such methods—quite unintentionally I am sure—by defending “misguided editorial attempts” and omitting my qualification that these referred to attempts to bring texts “up to date”.

In working on, and performing, during the last ten years a good number of works of this period I have found nothing better than to go to the original sources, and whatever an editor or performers may ultimately do, the first duty is to see that these are available.

Yours faithfully,

GERALD FINZI.

3rd December, 1950.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—May I add a brief comment on Mr. Finzi's letter, dated 24th November? In my previous review I had asked Mr. Finzi if he knew exactly how the orchestral part of Handel's *Messiah* was performed during the composer's lifetime. Mr. Finzi's (expected) reply, that he did not know, invalidates the unspecified relevancy of his former assertion that “time after time misconceptions of their work” (referring here to composers of earlier generations) “have been cleared away only by a return to the original text. . . .” By his answer Mr. Finzi has clearly proved that not even facsimile reprints of the composer's autograph nor the most scrupulous collation of all existing original sources (as in the case of Dr. Coopersmith's recent *Messiah* edition) are able to solve the vital problem of its orchestral accompaniments. By his negative reply Mr. Finzi has also tacitly admitted that his phrase “the unwritten traditions of every age” obviously should refer to other “anomalies of arbitrary notation” besides the special question of ornaments with which alone it is linked in his editorial preface. In short: Mr. Finzi's reply to my question has considerably clarified the issue of interpretative aims in any edition of old music. I quite agree with him that it is the editor's first duty to make the original text available. But it must be equally understood, that this “original source”, while being of the greatest importance for a limited number of scholars, cannot and should not be used as exclusive basis for practical performance to-day. The simple case of Handel's *Messiah* demonstrates clearly to every layman the evident irrelevancy of an original source for this very purpose. (There are, of course, much more complicated cases where no “original source”, fitting into Mr. Finzi's conception of the term, exists. Such cases are presented for instance by Monteverdi's opera *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* (1641) or by Heinrich Schütz' late *Passions* (1666), all of them only available in non-autograph copies, made after the death of these composers.) It is here where the modern editor with his—often merely conjectural—work of necessary reconstruction and implementation has to step in. And it is here, where—to use Mr. Finzi's own phraseology—“misconceptions of the works” of such composers may occur through “misguided editorial attempts to bring them up to date”. If Mr. Finzi will collate for instance the numerous editions of the three preserved main operas of Monteverdi with their respective “original sources” he will find much material to justify his own misgivings about the practices of some modern editors, but also ample proof of the relevancy of my own assertion that “the arbitrariness of the original score should receive its fair share of blame”. Not all editors—confronted as they were and still are with almost insoluble problems accruing from the incomplete, arbitrary or simply non-existent “original source”—have “tampered with their texts”, if and when deviating from the oblique base of the original.

I am indeed gratified to learn from Mr. Finzi's letter that he withdraws *post festum* the generalisations in the last paragraph of his preface by confining his misgivings to the special case of “an editor of English 18th-century music”. I am unable to guess the object of Mr. Finzi's editorial grievance, and I think it would be more in keeping with scholarly methods if he told us plainly the name of this editor and the publications he has in mind. As long as he prefers generalities to specifications, he will always make himself liable to misunderstandings even among his professional readers. *Quod erat demonstrandum. . . .*

Yours faithfully,

H. F. REDLICH.

3rd December, 1950.

EGON WELLESZ

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—In his review of “Three Works by Egon Wellesz” in the November issue, N. G. Long attempts a general classification of this composer's achievement, resulting from opinions on his work which are hardly reconcilable with the historic facts. He calls Wellesz “not a prolific composer” and comments on “the hesitancy of the writing as a whole” while almost in the same breath speaking of “his steady output which has not been interrupted by his change of domicile”. I submit that none of these sweeping statements—self-contradictory as they are—can be accepted by those of your readers conversant with the facts of Wellesz' life and work. I do not know by what yardstick Mr. Long measures a composer's output and I am quite ready to believe that, compared with Telemann and Schubert, any modern composer is liable to cut a sorry figure as far

as opus numbers are concerned. However, if assessed according to modern standards of musical creation, Wellesz' harvest since 1944 alone is no mean feat for a man in his middle sixties: three symphonies (the third has not been completely orchestrated up to date), three string quartets, the Cantata, *The Leadens and the Golden Echo*, an Octet for wind instruments and strings, and a number of shorter vocal compositions. In addition Wellesz has just completed his first 3 act opera on an English text—*Incognita*—on a libretto by Elizabeth Mackenzie, after Congreve's novel. (This work has been accepted for performance by the Oxford University Opera Club and will receive its first performance in November, 1951, under the direction of Professor Westrup.) Previous to this recent period of creative activity Wellesz' composition—quite contrary to your reviewer's assertions—had really and truly been interrupted by his change of domicile, as Mr. Long could have found out easily by consulting my article "Egon Wellesz—an Austrian composer in Britain" (published in *MUSIC REVIEW*, May, 1946) where I compared Wellesz' six years of interrupted creative work with the similar psychological phenomenon in Wagner's life during his Zürich exile (1849–1854). If Mr. Long had further taken the trouble to look up my earlier articles on Wellesz (cf. *Grove's Dictionary*, Suppl. vol. 1940, and *Musical Quarterly*, January, 1940, respectively), both containing a complete catalogue of works and enumerating—amongst others—5 large-scale operas, 4 ballets, 5 large orchestral compositions, 4 choral works, 4 string quartets besides a host of smaller vocal and instrumental compositions, he would probably have found ample reasons for changing his mind on the composer's alleged "hesitancy in writing".

Towards the end of his review, Mr. Long refers to the latest compositions of the now 65-year-old composer as being "curiously immature" and he tries to justify this harsh judgment by accusing "the whole musical generation" (to which Wellesz evidently belongs) of the same "immaturity". Having earlier spoken in vague terms of Wellesz' "elders and contemporaries" without ever mentioning a single name, Mr. Long has considerably obscured his final judgment. It would be interesting to know exactly who in his opinion is deserving of that censorious epithet in this context. Is it Wellesz' first mentor, Arnold Schönberg, the veteran champion of the boldest cerebral experimentalism in music? Or is it Alban Berg, Wellesz' exact contemporary and Schönberg's ardent disciple, whose compositions, including the unique masterpiece, *Wozzeck*, are rather the over-ripe last fruit of autumnal Post-Romanticism than specimens of artistic immaturity? Unless Mr. Long finds more cogent reasons for his final verdict on Egon Wellesz, the maturity of his opinions leading up to it must in itself remain a matter of doubt.

Yours faithfully,

H. F. REDLICH.

30, Herne Hill, S.E.24.

15th March, 1951.

PSYCHOANALYSIS—DALLAPICCOLA'S "IL PRIGIONERO" IN ISRAEL

To the Editor of *THE MUSIC REVIEW*.

SIR,—Taking your request literally to keep this communication as short as possible, I have to ask (a) the interested reader to examine it in conjunction with André Michel's *Psychoanalysis of Music* (MR, XI/4, pp. 253–276) and with Peter Gradenwitz' comment (*op. cit.*, p. 348) on my review of *Il Prigionero* respectively; (b) André Michel to forgive me for not going into the highly stimulating and valuable aspects of his article; (c) you, Sir, to accept a curt compliment on, instead of an enthusiastic appreciation of, your courage in publishing an article which was bound to provoke infantile comment. The trouble is, of course, that so many unmusical people think they have a right to be interested in the psychology of music that many musical people think they have a right not to be.

MICHEL'S musico-characterological typology lacks scientific method. To take two extreme examples:—(1) "Chopin is justly the author of a *Berceuse* and a *Barcarolle*. Exiled from his country . . . that oral musician listened only to the voices of his remote past". (2) "Fauré, who also is oral, wrote *Barcarolles*". Apart from the fact that this kind of proposition does not disclose what exactly it intends to show (do the *Barcarolles* show Fauré's orality, or does Fauré's orality show the *Barcarolle* to be oral?), there are plenty of motives for writing *Berceuses* and *Barcarolles* besides oral ones; there are plenty of oral musical tendencies which need not manifest themselves in the writing of *Berceuses* and *Barcarolles*; and everyone is oral enough to write *Berceuses* and *Barcarolles*. Since the oral stage is developmentally the most primitive, all fixations involve a measure of orality: an anal character is more oral than an oral character is anal. By way of M. Michel's happy-go-lucky methods, one might easily arrive at the conclusion that Britten is an oral character *par excellence*, not merely because of his tendency towards *Berceuses* and *Barcarolles*, but also because, for instance, the musical sea-side of *Peter Grimes* could not be more oral. But the musical characterization of Grimes himself is an extremely pronounced piece of anal work: Grimes would make a marvellous exhibit of an anal-sadistic character in a psychoanalytic museum.

Again, we all have an Oedipus complex, and though the superego supercedes it, one can hardly ever speak of a complete recession, least of all (among normal individuals) with artists. There is

nothing particularly spectacular about Wagner's Oedipus complex; what is more than noteworthy is that his intuition discovered the exact psychological significance of the Oedipus myth (see Michel's first small-print quotation); but this anticipation of psychoanalysis is not pointed out in the article.

And again:—"Anyhow there may have been in Wagner a certain latent homosexuality". There is in everyone.

When we come to musical rhythms and their relation to the principal rhythms in infantile life, we must not be tempted to pass, without warning, from scientific knowledge to more or less probable surmise. As far as I am aware, there is no direct evidence whatsoever to support P. Germain's observation that the foetal heart is the pre-natal prototype of all other infantile rhythms. And in any case one must distinguish between rhythms that are conative and rhythms that aren't (as well as between relative degrees of conation); obviously the former must have a far greater and far more direct influence on musical rhythm than the latter. Nor does P. Germain seem to distinguish between the intra-uterine phantasy, which is a psychoanalytically established fact, and the delicate problem of intra-uterine memories. As for the musical significance of *flatus*, that was discovered by the immediately post-Freudian Hungarian school of psychoanalysis long before P. Germain's *La Musique et la Psychoanalyse* was written.

In connection with "the perpetual erectibility" of Bach's music, Michel speaks of his being "the father of a considerable family". Now one may be extremely potent, yet sterile (in fact, sterilization increases potency), and conversely, one can be very fertile on a very low level of potency (in fact, *via* artificial insemination, one can be fertile and completely impotent). It is incomprehensible that a man of Michel's scientific attainment should suddenly descend to the level of sexological knowledge displayed in certain replies to readers' letters in the feminine press.

"Musical consciousness is of a temporal order". Not necessarily: see Mozart's experiences of hearing, in his imagination, everything at the same time.

"The language of words is able to express but one [thought] at a time". By no means. A great number of simultaneous thoughts will be found in most kinds of good poetry. In the paragraph in question, Michel offends, moreover, against the logical Law of Identity, in that he applies the term "thought" to different and undefined meanings, according as he speaks of language or music.

"... the self-punitive character of [Mélisande's] parapraxis":—I find myself unable to accept the psychoanalytic validity of the term "self-punitive". By "self" we always mean that part of our personality with which we consciously identify ourselves. But this is only our ego, and not the whole of it either; and there are the id and the superego besides—each of which can be the object of in-turned, moralized aggression (for there is such a thing as a conflict *within* the superego). In short, "intro-punitive" is the word.

"This conception [of Delacroix and Frieda Teller, concerning the musico-psychoanalytic value of the hearer's extra-musical phantasies under musical stimulation] has its use". It hasn't; none at all. It cannot be too firmly stressed that the musical experiences of unmusical people, or the unmusical experiences of musical people, are not a legitimate fulcrum for musical psychology. It is this sort of "psychology" which helps many a musician towards rationalizing his primitive fear of psychoanalysis.

In fact, there are quite a few musical points in Michel's article which aren't musical enough. With these the reader will, I trust, deal by himself. It must, however, be emphasized that when he comes to talk of Schönberg, André Michel has, demonstrably, not the very vaguest idea of what he is talking about. Especially amusing is this gem:—"What is indisputably moving in the musicians of the Schönberg school does not come from their system". Indeed. What is indisputably moving in Haydn and Mozart doesn't come from the tonic-dominant system either.

GRADENWITZ:—"Hans Keller seems to imply by the use of a colon that the reason for [Israel's] favourable reaction[s] [to Dallapiccola's opera] lay in the original French story in which the prisoner is the Rabbi Aser Abarbanel". My colon implied *a*, not *the* reason. Nor was this interpretation intended as a criticism; on the contrary, it was suggested to me by the composer himself. It made sense to me since I thought that the music was too good to be received with wide and immediate enthusiasm. No doubt the composer thought likewise. My objections referred solely to the theatrical side of the work, and the Palestine presentations (on the radio and records) had no theatrical side. But when Mr. Gradenwitz goes on to say that he "happened to make almost the same remarks on the drama [of the *Walküre*] as Mr. Keller did on Dallapiccola's", and that "yet frequent and devoted opera-goers certainly regard Wagner's music dramas as very effective operas", I must retort that the question of how far an opera presents a visible story is not a matter for personal and unprovable decision, but can ascertainably be answered in terms of the characters' interaction. Mr. Gradenwitz may like to compare the *Walküre* with *Il Prigionero* from this point of view.

Yours faithfully,

HANS KELLER.

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